



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES

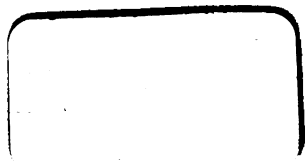


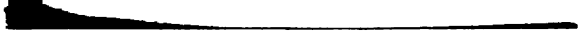
3 3433 07486231 3

# THE FLOWER CHILDREN



Frances Bennett Callaway





Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google







FRANCES BENNETT CALLAWAY AND TWO OF HER FLOWER CHILDREN

Not to A

14/4/06  
24-

# BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN

BY  
FRANCES BENNETT CALLAWAY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
CAROLINE B. SHAY



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

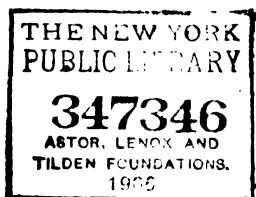
150 NASSAU STREET

BOSTON

NEW YORK

CHICAGO





**COPYRIGHT, 1905,  
BY AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.**

*This story is dedicated with loving greeting to all flower children wherever they may be, who are planting seeds, tending their gardens, or carrying flowers to cheer up those who are in need of cheer. Every flower they give away blooms for them in heaven, and every bit of gladness they give to others will return to their own hearts in joy that no one can take away.*



## FOREWORD

THE hills of Western New York were swathed in filmy purple, and the white farmhouses glistened in the sunshine that was ripening the golden pumpkins. It was vacation time in the village of Castile, when a group of merry girls with baskets of bright blossoms in their hands paused in front of Orchard Cottage, beautifully situated on the side of a hill. Tripping lightly up the white steps in the midst of the green lawn embroidered with lovely flowers, the girls entered a large, sunny basement room with windows extending across the entire front. Flowering plants and green vines and a picture of Frances Willard greeted them, but the warmest welcome came from Frances Bennett Callaway, their friend and the founder of the "Loyal Temperance Legion Flower Mission." The fragrant blossoms and old-fashioned flowers were soon skillfully packed so as to reach, in fresh condition, the children living in hot, dusty New York City; Miss Callaway meanwhile reading to her eager listeners extracts from letters from "Pastor Joyce" telling of the joy the flowers received had given the

children and sick people, many of whom never had possessed any kind of a blossom, nor even a green leaf.

For several summers this flower mission had been blessing the young people of Castile as well as those of New York. The girls on this special afternoon made plans for a Flower Show and Harvest Home Festival which was a splendid success, and which had an uplifting and beautifying influence on the homes of the town, and also on the outlying farms.

In this unselfish ministry, Miss Callaway was aided by the late Dr. Cordelia A. Greene of the Castile Sanitarium and by Dr. Mary T. Greene, the present proprietor. Dr. Cordelia Greene gave prizes at the flower show for the best vegetables and flower gardens.

"Bee's Flower Children" is founded on this flower mission work. The names are fictitious but most of the characters and scenes are true to life. The manuscript was finished just before Miss Callaway's brief illness, which ended suddenly and fatally on the third of February, 1905. On the day of her funeral service fifty children reverently and sorrowfully walked to the church before her casket, silently treading the crystal snow which was to them a type of the pure, white spirit of the one they loved. The whole village was in mourning.

## FOREWORD

v

Frances Bennett Callaway was born in Livonia, New York. Her father was a physician. The early years of her life were spent in St. Louis, Missouri, where her father was a successful practitioner, and her mother a wise and sympathetic helper in his benevolences to the poor and suffering. Little Frances used to accompany her father when he visited his patients, and soon learned that a flower or a loving word would often do more good than medicine. The child had met with an accident to the spine which made her especially frail in body, and this misfortune, borne with happy resignation and fortitude, caused her to be thoughtful and tender toward any one upon whom was laid an unusual burden.

Frances' mother, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ozro Clark, of Mt. Morris, New York, early encouraged the young girl to write. She studied at Oberlin College and later in the libraries of Oxford and London. After the death of father, mother and sister, Miss Callaway made her home with her aunt and cousins in Mt. Morris, New York. She afterwards built Orchard Cottage, in partnership with Dr. Mary Greene, living in Castile in order to obtain leisure for her literary work, and to keep in contact with the physicians at the Sanitarium.

It was during Frances Willard's and Anna Gordon's stay in Castile, in the winter of eighteen

hundred and ninety-seven, that Frances Callaway became interested in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and in its blessed organized work for children and young people through the junior and senior divisions of the Loyal Temperance Legion.

Miss Callaway was for several years a member of the faculty in the Chautauqua Summer School, and was also a successful teacher by correspondence. Her articles written for *The Union Signal*, *Farm and Fireside*, and other papers were fresh, witty and strong, and revealed her intense love of nature. Her books, "Charm and Courtesy in Letter Writing," "Studies for Letters," and "Charm and Courtesy in Conversation," are entirely different from the books usually written on such subjects. They have Miss Callaway's own atmosphere of gentle courtesy and swift intellectual and spiritual insight and humor. She was to the manner born—a lady in the highest sense of the word. Her large melting eyes revealed a rare intelligence and a soul of exceeding sweetness and strength.

It was her supreme desire that all the boys and girls should be earnest, active Christians. Her own spiritual life was radiant with little deeds of "week-day holiness," such as the youngest children could well understand. She said of the young people who are members of the Loyal

Temperance Legion Working Boys' Club and the L. T. L. flower mission: "They are not angels yet, but they hope to grow into something like them. We can give them patterns to live by and teach them that the honest, the humble, the reverent and the useful, are high and their work is high; while the careless, the vain, the scornful and the useless are low. We always can help them when we ourselves follow the one pattern, Christ."

The following beautiful letter to the boys of the L. T. L. Club was her last :

MY DEAR BOYS :

I was surprised all to pieces when a little girl as big as a fairy brought me in your beautiful bunch of carnations. Such a kind remembrance will help me more than medicine to get well.

These days of illness are like the Delectable Mountains to Christian when he could see over into the shining country of the King to which we all are going. We are told that the glory and radiance of this Heavenly City are as a jasper stone, clear as crystal ; and on either side grows the tree of Life, bearing fruit every month. And if the trees bear fruit there must be blossoms and singing birds and other pleasant things, and we are told that Kings do bring their glory and honor into this City. By Kings are meant those who have been brave and heroic and overcome temptation ; who have kept their lives pure as they walked with Christ. It is these the hymn speaks of as banqueting with the King of Kings. " We hear the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast."

I wish every one of my boys to walk with his face turned toward the light of the Heavenly City and his heart open to



the King of Kings, who loves him and wants him for His own.

Thanking you gratefully for the beautiful flowers,

I am your sincere friend,

FRANCES B. CALLAWAY.

Only a few months before her death Miss Callaway planted on the lawn, in front of Orchard Cottage, some crocus bulbs so skillfully arranged that when they appear at Easter time in radiant colors, the passer-by will read the words which were the inspiration and controlling force in Frances Bennett Callaway's victorious life, "God Is Love."

ELIZABETH P. GORDON.

Auburndale, Mass., April 3, 1905.

# CONTENTS.

---

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. A Difficult Beginning.....                    | 1    |
| II. Growing Up.....                              | 9    |
| III. Apple Blossoms.....                         | 19   |
| IV. A Disappointment.....                        | 21   |
| V. A Letter from Mother Margaret.....            | 28   |
| VI. The Skylight Room.....                       | 36   |
| VII. A Morning of Sunshine.....                  | 39   |
| VIII. Bee's Letter to Mother Margaret.....       | 46   |
| IX. Another Letter to Mother Margaret.....       | 49   |
| X. Dr. Ellen McGregor to Miss Evelyn Guillard... | 52   |
| XI. A Crown of Rejoicing.....                    | 55   |
| XII. The McCrystals.....                         | 60   |
| XIII. The Sign of the Cross.....                 | 65   |
| XIV. One False Step.....                         | 73   |
| XV. A Bunch of Violets.....                      | 78   |
| XVI. A Flower Mission Box.....                   | 84   |
| XVII. The Wintergreen Girl.....                  | 89   |
| XVIII. A Humble Teacher.....                     | 95   |
| XIX. Friends and Helpers.....                    | 101  |
| XX. Trials and Tribulations.....                 | 109  |
| XXI. An Evening of Shadows.....                  | 116  |
| XXII. How to Pack Flowers.....                   | 119  |
| XXIII. Difficulties in the Way.....              | 123  |

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| XXIV. Under the Hawthorn Tree.....                               | 128  |
| XXV. Some Experiments that Failed.....                           | 140  |
| XXVI. Flower Mission Letters.....                                | 148  |
| XXVII. Trying to be Good.....                                    | 154  |
| XXVIII. Lost in the Trillium Woods.....                          | 158  |
| XXIX. A Field of Daisies.....                                    | 169  |
| XXX. In Answer to Prayer.....                                    | 179  |
| XXXI. A Clear Beautiful Night of Stars.....                      | 188  |
| XXXII. Bittersweet.....  | 195  |
| XXXIII. Dr. Ellen's Story.....                                   | 201  |
| XXXIV. A Killing Frost.....                                      | 211  |
| XXXV. The Secret of a Weed's Plain Heart.....                    | 219  |
| XXXVI. The Kindness of Mr. Bird.....                             | 226  |
| XXXVII. Beneath the Cross it Grew.....                           | 227  |
| XXXVIII. A Letter from Dr. Ellen to Bee.....                     | 231  |
| XXXIX. A Letter from Pastor Joyce to the Flower<br>Children..... | 234  |
| XL. Dr. Ellen's Letter to Mother Margaret.....                   | 237  |
| XL I. The Lady in Black.....                                     | 238  |
| XL II. A Friend in Need.....                                     | 243  |
| XL III. Joy Cometh in the Morning.....                           | 247  |

# BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN

---

## CHAPTER I

### A DIFFICULT BEGINNING

It was one wild and stormy evening in March, when the wind was blowing with unusual fury over the bleak hills about the village of Glenchase, that our story begins. When William Eldbridge was an old man he could still remember how the bare woods darkened against the gray and lowering sky, and how wet the fields were as he came across the pasture after salting the sheep. Walking in the shelter of the hedge, for the rain was driving in his face like needles of ice, he heard a sound back of him like the bleating of a lamb, a plaintive sound as if the lamb had lost its mother. Once in a while it would be carried away in the roar and whirl of the wind and then it would come again more pitiful than ever. Eldbridge went back to see if he could find anything of the little creature which might

have strayed away from the flock, but the cries gradually died away and, finding nothing to reward his search, he once more faced the blustering wind and hurried home across the fields.

Warming himself before the blazing fire, glad of a sheltering roof on such a night of storm, William Eldbridge gave no more thought to the affair until he heard the sobbing cry again just outside the windows. Hastening to the door he was in time to let in his mother, who looked faint and ready to drop with the fatigue of carrying the bundle she had under her shawl. The mystery was at once solved, for Mother Margaret had been coming down the Cranesbill lane with the child in her arms, while her son had been walking on the other side of the hedge, and so missed seeing her. Helping her to an easy-chair in the warmest corner by the fire, William took her dripping wet bonnet and shawl while his mother quieted the child.

"Such a heart-breaking time as we have had, William," the good woman said, drying the tears from her eyes. "Our old neighbor, John Kent, is going fast to his reward and the Lord knows what that will be. We have not had pity enough on his loneliness, William. The man was dying there without a relative in the world but this wee bit of a bairn, his grandchild," and here Mother Margaret smoothed the damp curls clinging about

the baby face and gathered the child in her arms with all the compassionate tenderness of her mother heart.

"She must come here, William. I have promised John Kent. He could not die easy without my promise. Besides, he had some claim, a cousin only twice removed."

"Mother!" William cried, rising from his chair aghast, "what a promise was that to make! We cannot take a child into the house. All the quiet of our lives will be broken up."

"If the Lord wills, then the quiet shall be broken," said Mother Margaret, rocking softly back and forth, and crooning a lullaby, while the shadows climbing and dancing over the wall seemed to foretell the frolics and gayety which might come into the house where an old woman and her staid bachelor son had felt themselves so secure in their somber quiet.

"It's you, mother, that wills," returned William with some irritability.

Mother Margaret made no reply but to gather the child closer in her arms.

"Carlotta Primrose called me in there to see if her sage were winter killed," William said presently, by way of diverting the subject.

"Poor girl, she is very down-hearted."

"How many years has Carlotta been a girl, mother?"

"Carlotta may be forty-five or fifty. I told her we would give her enough cuttings from our sage to plant another field when it is time."

"Why, Mother Margaret, it would take every spear of sage on this place to plant the Primrose field."

"Very well, William, we are not needing sage just now and it will grow again. How thankful we should be that we have not suffered damage, William!"

"Is it no damage that our apple crop is killed and this spring freshet has carried the winter wheat away? The men in the sugar-bush are now grumbling because this fierce wind is carrying sticks and leaves into the sap which will ruin our sugar."

"It is as the Lord wills," returned Mother Margaret in placid accents which carried their own heart balm, and gently rocked the child in her arms.

"The Thirteenth of Corinthians has been with John Kent all day," Mother Margaret continued after a little silence. "You will always find her where there is any need of comfort."

"I noticed black Mink pawing up the turf at John Kent's gateway. The beast did not like this sleety storm. Why is it a godly woman with the face of a Madonna must drive a racer?"

"Mink will be broken in fast enough. He is

safely stabled now, for Dr. Ellen spends the night in caring for John Kent. It seems that she was greatly attached to John Kent's daughter-in-law, this little one's mother. Do you remember Carolyn Cranesbill?"

"I remember the whole kit of them. Carolyn inherited a good property from her father, but after she married George Kent he soon ran through with it. George was just another such a spendthrift as John Kent has been."

"I was thinking Carolyn went to school to you."

"Yes, Carolyn Cranesbill, Ellen McGregor, George Kent and John Slocum. I can see them every one sitting on the hard benches in the red schoolhouse, giggling and whispering over their schoolbooks."

"Ellen was always good," remonstrated Mother Margaret. "Her mother used to say if any one threw a stone at Ellen, she wouldn't throw it back."

"How many ways those youngsters contrived to torment me, but Ellen was the worst of all. She could drive me into a flame of jealousy any moment by turning to look over that dog-eared reader with John Slocum."

"You were only a foolish lad in your teens, William."

"Grubbing my way through college—I re-



member that well enough. It hardly seems twenty years ago, does it, mother?"

"Twenty years ago," repeated Mother Margaret, with a far look into the fire as she rocked back and forth, soothing the child in her arms; "and now our friends, the Cranesbills are all gone, and Ellen's people have been away so long that the old family of the McGregors are only a memory hereabouts, and this child the one heir left to John Kent. Much has happened in these twenty years, William, and now—it is as a dream in the night—a tale that is told."

"Is there any truth in the report that Ellen McGregor has offered to buy John Kent's place for a Cure?"

"If it were not true yesterday, it is to-day. The sheepskin man was there making out the papers, and John Kent's mind was greatly eased because he can satisfy his creditors. They say Ellen paid a good round sum."

"Mother Margaret," said William, after some further consideration, "you must not take upon yourself the care of this child. Your health does not permit so great a burden, and I will not have it."

William's tone was firm and resolute now, and he spoke with the manner of one who considers a question to be settled.

"William," said his mother gently without

any argument, "you hold her a moment or two while I look after supper."

Now if the child had screamed out lustily, Eldbridge could have endured that without flinching, and hardened his heart, but the half-stifled sob choked back with fright, the low pitiful wail of this homeless little one, completely unnerved him. What diplomacy Mother Margaret had practiced, to be sure. She was gone fully an hour, and when she returned the helpless little creature asleep in William Eldbridge's arms had such a hold of his heart strings as was never again loosed.

When only a few months old, Katherine Barbara Kent, left without father or mother, was sent to her grandfather, and the old man had tenderly cared for and loved her. John Kent was an old country gentleman with a warm, generous heart, a fiery temper, and an estate embarrassed with debts. He would willingly take off his coat to give to a man poorer than himself, and he never refused to go on a friend's paper, but once anger him, and he said himself it was as if he had seen the devil for days afterwards.

That night Eldbridge and the Thirteenth of Corinthians watched together with the dying man. To his great comfort he received Mother Margaret's promise that they would care for the child and love her as their own. At early dawn, when

the storm died away, John Kent, trusting in God's mercy, slipped into the peace and quiet of a new life. By the terms of the will, Eldbridge was left administrator of the estate; Dr. Ellen McGregor, who had been as a foster sister to Katherine's mother, was to have charge of her education, but the little girl was given to Margaret Eldbridge, who from that day was her Mother Margaret.

## CHAPTER II

### GROWING UP

WILLIAM ELDBRIDGE and his mother had given up their city home and come to live on the sheep farm, not because either of them knew much about tending sheep, but because they longed for the quiet of the country, and the companionship of such true-hearted friends as daffodils and robins, who never break their promises.

On this old farm, with its gnarled apple trees and thrifty "sugar-bush," Mother Margaret had spent her girlhood days. Here as a child she had often hunted four-leaf clovers or played hide-and-seek and blind-man's-buff with the Primrose girls, spinsters now, whose trellised, weather-beaten cottage stood just across the way.

Summer visitors had persuaded Lavinia and Patty, the younger and more ambitious sisters, to undertake a boarding-house in the city. Miss Carlotta, the eldest of the family, remained in the old homestead, where she made the most of her scant acres by planting them to sage and mint, for which she found ready market. She also culti-

vated an old-fashioned flower garden, filled with roses, pinks, sweet-alyssum, marigolds, and lilies, and this garden was the delight of Bee's childish heart.

Miss Primrose was a woman of some temper and sharpness of tongue, but her shrewd and real kindness of heart endeared this old friend to Mother Margaret; and not a day went by but some little civility, such as a crisp pie or a fresh loaf of cake, a roll of cream cheese, or a nosegay of flowers passed back and forth between the two homes.

As to William Eldbridge, he welcomed the retirement of sheep farming as being favorable to his other occupation, that of making books.

They had long been used to perfect quiet in the Eldbridge home as the household went about their daily appointed tasks, the only sound to break the stillness being the steady solemn ticking of the old clock, the creaking of Mother Margaret's rocker as she swayed back and forth at her knitting, or the rattling of some loose casement shaken by an occasional gust of wind. With the coming of a child into the house, this peaceful quiet was broken up.

Often when William had flattered himself that he had made a fairly good beginning on a page, the door of his study would fly open and there, with a joyous burst of laughter, would come the

patter of little feet and a shining yellow head like a dandelion blossom bobbing up around his desk. At such times, Katherine Barbara's plump arms would naturally upset the ink, scatter the manuscripts and joggle the writing tablet. Finally the young lady would climb up on Eldbridge's chair and into his lap, plying him all the while with a steady stream of questions not set down in the catechism.

"Do we have wings when we go to heaven?"

"Do angels come right down here through the walls of the house?"

"Why don't they take a nap sometimes same as we do?"

"Do we have anything to eat up in heaven?"

"Why does Aunt Carlotta Primrose make such long prayers? Doesn't God know everything?"

Sometimes the questions would pierce through a man's thick hide of selfishness like sharp arrows. William sent the little girl one day to put a few pennies in a small black leather purse which was almost empty.

"Brother Will, whose pocketbook is that?" questioned Katherine Barbara?

"That is the Lord's pocketbook."

"Brother Will, does the Lord know he has a pocketbook?"

Finding his study hours mercilessly broken up,

Eldbridge would take his hat and stick and go to the fields, but Katherine Barbara would come following after him like Mary's proverbial lamb, and after awhile it did not seem natural to go anywhere without a small person dancing at his heels or tugging at his coat-tails.

Katherine Barbara seemed so long a name for such a morsel of a girl that it was shortened to Katherine B. and after a while it was just Bee. This name seemed to suit the little girl very well, for Bee loved flowers and all sorts of outdoor things and was always flying in and out among them. William Eldbridge soon found that Bee possessed one unusual accomplishment which made her an entertaining companion; she was a good listener. By the hour, she would keep as still as a mouse while he told her stories of trees, flowers, clouds, and birds; in this way the two passed the time pleasantly together and learned a number of things.

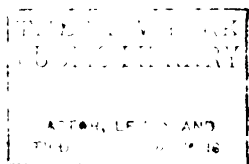
Bee hated to sew patchwork or learn her lessons, but she loved to hunt for wild strawberries, or to wade in the brook after pebbles which glistened under the clear water like rubies and diamonds. How rich the child felt when she had gathered her pockets full of these shining stones and snail shells, acorn cups and other like treasures, until Mother Margaret in despair used to threaten to sew up her pockets altogether.



**BEE LOVED FLOWERS**

*p. 12*





When Bee did sit down to learn her numbers two by two, and three by three, it was always with a little sigh because they were not crickets or grasshoppers that could skip and hop and play with a little girl.

Mother Margaret and William had always supposed there were uncommonly few children in the neighborhood, but as soon as Bee appeared the children were as thick as butterflies around the house, and even the young robins and squirrels chirping and frisking about were more plentiful, or it may have been that Bee called attention to them. At all events the child was always surrounded with playmates and her life on the old sheep farm with Mother Margaret and Brother Will was a joyous one.

It was one day early in May when the skies' tenderest blue and the willow's early green were glassed in the clear stream down in the meadow that Eldbridge found Bee with her favorite companions, Myra, Alice, Lucy Amelia, and Anne, sitting in the grass telling each other stories. William was invited to join the little company when Bee told this dream she had just dreamed the night before.

"I dreamed that once I was a nice girl and minded every word Mother Margaret said, an' my wings began to grow an' grow an' grow until they were like the wings of a mother angel," and

Bee looked up into the blue where a white cloud was floating softly before the wind. "An' the sky was bright, oh, so bright! an' the light shined all around me. That was the angels coming after me, an' they took me up into heaven an' there I had a white silk robe, just beautiful. An' the grass was all sparkles an' the leaves on the trees lovely an' we walked through flowers, an' the streets of the village were all gold like the dandelions and buttercups. An' after awhile I said to Jesus,

" 'Can I go back for a minute?'

" An' Jesus said, smiling,

" 'What do you want to go back for?'

" An' I said,

" 'I want something to eat.'

" An' Jesus said, with the sweetest looks,

" 'We have plenty to eat up here. You can have everything—everything you want.'"

The sun was shining with a clear light over the dandelions and the buttercups that were all gold like the streets of heaven, and on the stream that was pure crystal like the flood of life, and the innocent faces of the children looked at William wistfully as if to say:

"Can this dream be true? Can we have everything we want in heaven?"

It was one forenoon in midsummer; Miss Carlotta and Henry Primrose were gathering herbs



**“ WE LOVE YOU, GOD, FOR THE LILIES.”**

*p. 15*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

in the mint field and the children were playing in the garden. Miss Carlotta, who thought it was always well to keep her eye on children to see they were in no mischief, stopped once to peer through the thick-leaved syringa and fringe bushes, when she discovered Bee standing among her tall Madonna lilies, her hands actually upon the stems. Aunt Carlotta prized those lilies and she was about to speak out sharply when the childish voice was heard in a rapture of prayer:

“O God, Anne Primrose and me are having such a good time. We thank you. We love you, God—we love you for the lilies—for Christ’s sake—Amen.”

“Goodness me,” murmured Aunt Carlotta, going back to her herbs with a strange glow in her heart. “I didn’t suppose John Kent’s grandchild was growing up like that.”

When we would be good, evil is ever present with us, and it was only the next morning that Bee quietly let the cat in during prayers. Aunt Carlotta Primrose, who was present that morning, was moving her chair vigorously back and forth, a peculiar way she had of doing, whenever she waxed in fervor; and the cat, having been trained at such a signal to go through with a series of circus performances, now began leaping back and forth over Aunt Carlotta’s chair until Bee, after a smothered gurgle, laughed aloud. Aunt Car-

lotta took the earliest opportunity to reprove the child sharply and Bee, not being used to reproof, went angrily out of the room slamming the door.

A long sad hour followed in the study when Bee was sternly called to account for her irreverence and discourtesy.

"It was the devil to whose voice you listened this morning, Bee, and not to your good angel."

"Brother Will," said Bee, creeping into his arms and leaning her tear-wet face against his cheek, "I'm such a little girl, how can I know when it's the good angel and when it's the devil speaking to me?"

What a hard question to answer!

Bee had been in school one or two years when she was overtaken with a zeal to improve the family, and William Eldbridge, whose handwriting was as careless as it was illegible, one morning found the following delicious note lying upon his desk:

"MY DEAR MR. ELDBRIDGE:

"You ought to tak more pians with yor riting.

"Yor friend

"BEE"

It must have been a number of years afterwards, although it only seemed a few days, when Bee came rushing into the house after school one afternoon with three or four youngsters at her heels, all of them joining in a yell which it seemed

at the moment would lift the roof from the house.

"What do you mean?" asked Mother Margaret, paling with fright.

"It's the L. T. L. yell, Mother Margaret," returned Bee with all excitement. "L. T. L. stands for Loyal Temperance Legion and we all belong. There are five hundred thousand of us."

"I should think so from the sound," said Aunt Carlotta, looking about for some way to escape.

"Now do be quiet, Bee," entreated Mother Margaret gently.

"The yell is like this," cried Bee, paying no heed to Mother Margaret's words, and the children, all opening their mouths very wide, gave the yell over again twice as loud as before.

"Tremble, King Alcohol,  
We are growing up!"

William regarded Bee with surprise. It had never occurred to him that she was growing up, but surely here was a good-sized girl, with wind-roughened hair braided in two tails down her back, a sprinkling of freckles on her sun-burned cheeks, and nothing to remind him of the child who came to them a dozen years before but the sparkles in her eyes and a roguish, laughing expression about her mouth. Bee was growing up.



"She is growing up to be a selfish, heedless, worldly-minded girl," said Aunt Carlotta. "Last Sunday she could name the flowers on every bonnet in church, but she couldn't tell one word of the sermon. Her only idea of going to church is to get some fun out of it."

"Which isn't a bad one," argued William Eldbridge.

"Aunt Carlotta is right," said Dr. Ellen. "Bee is loving-hearted, and she has a lot of good stuff in her, but we are all of us spoiling her as fast as we can. She must go away."

"Where shall we send her?" asked Mother Margaret with a tremble in her voice.

"We must send her away to a good school where she will learn the meaning of the word obey."

Bee, always joyous at the thought of any change, soon afterwards went away to a distant school, and Mother Margaret missed her sadly. As for William, the house was so quiet he could not write for a long while.

## CHAPTER III

### APPLE BLOSSOMS

God enters by a private door into every individual.

—EMERSON.

It was a rainy April morning, with a lowering sky over a gray sea and a fresh breeze dashing the salt mist into one's face. The passengers on the ferry-boat shivered in the keen chill of the air and huddled together, crowding a man with his arms full of apple blossoms closer to Bee.

The salt air, saturated with the delicate perfume of the blossoms, brought back to Bee's mind the pink and white billows of the orchards at home, and she wondered if Mother Margaret would be walking out under the apple trees, and if that faithful collie, Barney, frolicking over the rough grass, would be bounding away from her to meet his master, Will, who would be back from salting the sheep by this time. Bee had not been home in a long while, and as these fancies came fluttering about her she could have gone down on her knees and begged the man near her for just one blossom. When Bee wanted anything, she wanted it hard.

In Bee's experience apple blossoms and flower gardens had always been as free to every one as air and sunshine, and it was a new idea that any one could be hungry for them and not have them.

"Where do you take your flowers?" a bystander inquired of the man.

"They go to the hospital," was the reply.

This gave Bee another idea. Apple blossoms are useful. They are good for cheering up people.

We cannot do the slightest thing in Christ's service without uplifting some other life, and this man with his arms full of apple blossoms was doing more with them than ever he knew. The touch of Divine Love on the girl's heart was so light that Bee herself was not conscious of it, and yet the ideas entering her thought along with the fragrance of the apple blossoms were to change and shape her whole life, and set in order shining events whose influence would go on for years to come.

Leaning carelessly on the rail and looking out at the drifting clouds and troubled sea, the young girl only knew that she was hungering for Mother Margaret and apple blossoms.

## CHAPTER IV

### A DISAPPOINTMENT

APPLE blossoms were not to be found in the shopping district of New York that morning, but stopping at a convenient flower stand, Bee selected a pure white La France rose. It was a beauty and as the girl pinned it on her jacket she wondered what she should go without to make up for such reckless extravagance. With the rose, she also purchased two pots of hyacinths, one flower tall, thin, and blue, just suited to Miss Lavinia Primrose, the other short, plump, and rosy, which seemed naturally to belong to Miss Patty.

A little later she rang the bell at a plain, old-fashioned doorway in the neighborhood of Stuyvesant Square, the home of the Primrose sisters. Miss Patty, the younger of the two, spent most of her time in the kitchen putting together such muffins and teacakes that no guest after once tasting of them ever wanted to go away. Miss Lavinia, the elder sister, had the upstairs in charge, where with broom and dust-pan she was

continually bringing such cyclones of discomfort into chamber and hall, that no guest after suffering the terror of two or three onsets ever wanted to stay. Servants seldom endured Miss Lavinia's exaction more than a week or two, and the few guests who remained with the sisters were as gold tried by fire.

Bee shook the drops from her umbrella and stood it up in the corner, expecting to wait patiently any length of time for some one to open the door. As she stood there on the threshold she noticed that crocuses were showing brightly in the square, and the trees were putting out young leaves with a kind of tender gladness against the rainy sky. Even the raindrops themselves were falling on the pavement with an elastic bound as if beating with joy like a young girl's heart. Bee's reverie was broken by the most placid little voice saying in a slow, mild accent :

"Will Miss please come in out of the rain?" and turning she saw the diminutive maid who had been holding the door open a long while.

"Oh, Miss Lavinia!—Miss Patty!" Bee cried, as both ladies now appeared, and she ran in to be warmly welcomed, for she had often spent her school vacations with them.

"The sofa hasn't changed one bit," Bee observed, when she and Miss Lavinia were upstairs

in the shabby but immaculately neat room by courtesy called the parlor, "and how natural and friendly the palm trees look! Has William Shakespeare's face been scrubbed this morning—he looks so bright and shining?"

"Be careful!" cried Miss Lavinia anxiously. "His head was broken off in house cleaning, but you wouldn't notice it if you didn't take hold of him. Seems as if you look pale," continued Miss Lavinia, regarding Bee critically, "perhaps that complexion belongs with sandy hair."

"Perhaps the freckles are washed off," returned Bee gayly. "You have new lace curtains, Miss Lavinia!"

"Nothing is ever new with us," groaned Miss Lavinia. "How can we get new things with the winter so long and hard, and the house half empty and a ruinous rent to pay! We freshen up the old the best we can, and the mahogany is solid—that will wear as long as we do." As she spoke, Miss Lavinia looked down at her once delicate hands now pitifully thin and worn.

"When is Mother Margaret coming?" asked Bee, not so sympathetic as she might be with Miss Lavinia's woes. Miss Lavinia was always blue.

"She isn't coming at all," returned Miss Lavinia briefly.

"Not coming!" all the tenderness and glad-

ness seemed to melt out of the April morning as Bee repeated these words. "Isn't it too bad?"

"It's too bad for us," and Miss Lavinia sighed deeply. "We worked so hard to get ready for Margaret. But she doesn't mind. She thinks we just take boarders for the pleasure of it."

"We had planned such a good time," said Bee, giving no heed to the crackle and sputter of Miss Lavinia's voice. "I am so disappointed."

"So are we disappointed. We missed renting the back parlor to a party who would have stayed with us all summer. If Margaret thinks that is religion, I don't. It isn't according to Scripture to break your word."

"Mother Margaret does keep her word," flashed Bee, her blue eyes quite wide and sparkling with indignation.

"I told Patty this morning I wasn't going to slave myself to death for nothing any more," Miss Lavinia went on in her rasping voice. "When I die," and Miss Lavinia parenthetically dried her eyes, "I want to die a natural death."

"Mother Margaret won't let you lose one penny on her account." Bee sat up now quite stiff and straight, and was frightened by the tones of her own voice.

"You always answer me back," snapped Miss Lavinia, as if this were an unheard-of grievance.

"When any one speaks against Mother Mar-

garet, I will answer back." Bee felt herself growing so hot by this time that she speedily made an excuse to escape to her own room which was just across a broad hall. It was a large, pleasant apartment with folding doors and these Bee fastened securely. Going to the window the girl looked out at the downpour of rain and the dull, brick walls at the back of the house opposite, so high that it was only with uplifted face that she could see the sky. A line of wet clothes flapped over the bit of green in the back yard and a wicked-looking black cat crouched on the dividing wall.

"Miss Lavinia is as cross as a brier-patch," Bee confided to this wicked and very unsocial-looking cat.

The cat blinked her eyes and wrapped her tail more closely around her feet, which Bee regarded as an answer in the affirmative.

"I wonder why it is," continued Bee, still addressing the cat for lack of a better audience, "Mother Margaret has lived with Miss Carlotta and Miss Lavinia years and years, and keeps as sweet and smooth as cream, and I can't be with them an hour without having a scrap. Am I going to be like Miss Lavinia when I grow old?"

While pondering over these things, there came sadly to the girl's mind a vision of home where red-breasted robins would be hopping along the



garden walk aflame with yellow daffodils. Tears slowly filled her eyes, but these she dashed angrily away and began combing the tangles out of her hair with a kind of savage fury. As she plaited her braids, Bee's eyes now chanced to rest upon a blue morocco Bible which she had tumbled out on the dresser when she unpacked her things. It was one that Dr. Ellen had given her when she left home and she opened it now at Dr. Ellen's favorite chapter, the Thirteenth of First Corinthians. These passages were marked :

*" Love suffereth long, and is kind."*

*" Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked."*

*" Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."*

" How can it be? how can it be? " meditated the girl, resting her chin in her hand. " How can any one bear Miss Lavinia's hateful ways and not be provoked? I will pray about it."

" Oh, Father, Thou knowest how rasping and spiteful Miss Lavinia is—and my temper is wicked and not suited to living with Miss Lavinia. It carries me away so quick before I can say over the foundations of heaven or do any of the good things Mother Margaret told me to do. Dear Father, help me not to hate Miss Lavinia ! It's so lonesome to hate people. Help me to be their loving, good child for Christ's sake." After

this rather pharisaical setting forth of Miss Lavinia's faults Bee opened the little Bible again, at the Thirteenth of First Corinthians and read :

*"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things—endureth all things."*

Looking up, Bee saw the white rose which Miss Lavinia had so carefully arranged in a deep vase, she noticed the pretty comfortable with its pattern of pink roses spread thoughtfully at the foot of her bed ; the curtains freshly done up by Miss Lavinia's own hands, so worn and thin. With a feeling of tenderness springing up in her heart there came also to mind her own little disappointment and the sob in her throat would no longer be choked back. The Thirteenth of First Corinthians was washed out of sight in tears.

## CHAPTER V

### A LETTER FROM MOTHER MARGARET

AFTER lunch, while Miss Lavinia was engaged in sweeping like a whirlwind on the top floor, Bee skipped down to the basement, where she found Miss Patty, with the help of her small maid, Anna, making a loaf of nut cake for the Chinese Mission Social. Miss Patty was always making good things for missions and socials.

"If you will let me stay down here and help you, Miss Patty," said Bee, slipping into an apron, "Anna might go upstairs and dust for Miss Lavinia."

"Of course you can stay down here with me," replied Miss Patty, beaming hospitably, "but you needn't think you must help."

"I want to!" insisted Bee, taking the pan of nuts and beginning to pick out the meats while Miss Patty seeded and chopped the raisins. Then the two had the nicest social of their own together.

"Ting-a-ling-a-ling," went the front-door bell.

"That's the postman," said Miss Patty, be-

*MOTHER MARGARET'S LETTER* 29

ginning to roll down her sleeves. "He always rings with a jerk like that."

"Oh, let me go," cried Bee, setting down her pan of nuts and whirling upstairs like a bit of thistledown. Bee always was light and quick on her feet.

"What do you want?" asked the postman smiling, when Bee opened the door, for he remembered her well, having brought her letters before.

"I want a million dollars," said Bee, putting out her hands.

"Here it is," said the postman, handing out a nice fat letter, addressed in a clear fine hand and sealed with wax.

"It's from Mother Margaret," cried Bee, rushing back to Miss Patty. "Wouldn't you like to hear it, Miss Patty?"

"Of course I would," said Miss Patty, looking expectant. If it's from Margaret, it's sure to be something good."

"The postman said it was as good as a million dollars, and it is," said Bee, unfolding her letter and smoothing it out carefully before she began reading:

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL :

I am grieved that I cannot be with you this vacation. We would have had such fun——

"That sounds like Mother Margaret, doesn't

it, Miss Patty?" and Bee looked to her audience for sympathy.

"Margaret always liked fun," responded Miss Patty.

William is to be called away on business in a few days and may be gone several months, so I must stay at home and look after the lambs, and dairy, and bees. Our sugar-bush brought us a thousand pounds of sugar this year. I thought of you when we made the little scalloped cakes in the heart-shaped tins. Tell Miss Patty I will send her a box while you are there that you may all have a taste of them.

The Thirteenth of First Corinthians will come to New York in my place. She has worked so hard this winter that she deserves a vacation, and you two must go on some pleasant and instructive excursion every day. William particularly requests Dr. Ellen to take you to the museum in Central Park, where you will find gems, missals, mummies, and art treasures worthy of study.

Don't forget to take the Primrose girls with you on some of your outings. Those girls have been my friends for years, and I always remember them in the warmest corner of my heart. Carlotta wishes that Lavinia and Patty would give up the hard life they are living now and be content to take a dinner of herbs with her. They will be glad to hear that Carlotta's sage and mint wintered well, and that the striped tulips in her garden are handsome just now. I wish you could see the yellow daffodils on the south side of the house unbonneting their yellow heads this morning.

I love my little girl tenderly, and am afraid I do not tell her about it half often enough. May the Father bless my child and keep her good, is the constant prayer of her affectionate

MOTHER MARGARET.

"Isn't that a good letter?" said Miss Patty

## MOTHER MARGARET'S LETTER 31

with feeling. "Seems as if I could just smell the spearmint and the clover down in our pasture, and hear the bees a-humming."

"I wish I was going home," said Bee, turning hastily away to dry a couple of tears on the corner of her apron.

"I can't make out," said Miss Patty, sifting the flour, "why you should call Dr. Ellen the Thirteenth of First Corinthians. I have heard of calling people by Scripture names before; I had an uncle named Bethel, but I never did hear of taking a whole chapter."

"It's like this with Dr. Ellen and me," returned Bee, opening a nut carefully. "Whenever we go away anywhere together, we study that chapter and say it over together every day. Dr. Ellen says we must not only have the words in our hearts, but we must live them."

"A living epistle," reflected Miss Patty, stirring together the butter and sugar. "I suppose any one can be like that when she sits calm and peaceful in a rocker with everything going smooth and easy, but when there come situations and storms and exasperations stirring one up, the Thirteenth of First Corinthians isn't in human nature."

"I know that," said Bee soberly. "Mother Margaret has explained it all out to me a good many times. She says the Divine nature is in-

side the human nature like the life in the seed. When sunshine and rain fall on the seed, the life hidden inside of it grows. When we are soaked through and through with loving, like the Thirteenth of First Corinthians, then we begin to grow. It's an awful mystery."

The two workers were silent for a little space.

"I know it's difficult to get soaked through when you're hard like me," continued Bee after a while, "but Dr. Ellen has such a soft, tender heart. She loves to suffer long, and she is just as good to the cross ones, and the hateful ones, who most worry the life out of her, as she is to the sweet ones like Miss Evelyn. Dr. Ellen just loves the 'bears' and 'believes' and 'hopes' in that chapter and endures everything from morning till night. That's why we call her the Thirteenth of First Corinthians.

"If there is any one in the village who is in trouble, they run for Dr. Ellen. One day when she came down the street, they told her a little child had just been bitten by a dog with hydrophobia. I remember just how she looked with her white dress blowing all about her as she picked up the child in her arms and sat down on the curb stone——"

"In a clean white dress?" interrupted Miss Patty.

"In a clean white dress," repeated Bee, gravely,

*MOTHER MARGARET'S LETTER* 33

"and put her lips to the child's flesh, and she never flinched. She sucked the poison all out, and saved the child."

"That was like the Thirteenth of First Corinthians," admitted Miss Patty, breaking the eggs carefully.

"One winter," continued Bee, "Grandma Amesbry cried fit to break her heart because she had to shut up her house and leave her cat. The relative she was going to in the next village wouldn't have the cat. As busy as she was, Dr. Ellen took her black Mink and went out and hunted a boarding-place for that pet in a nice Christian family and paid its board herself. When Grandma Amesbry came back in the spring to her cottage, her pussy cat was there purring away like a teakettle and you should have seen how pleased the old lady was."

"How does Dr. Ellen manage tramps that come through the town?" queried Miss Patty, stirring the cake together. "Glenchase used to be noted for tramps."

"The Thirteenth of Corinthians isn't troubled much with tramps. She gives them good meals and on week days they have to saw and split wood. On Sundays they have to read Scripture with her for an hour. Tramps are very scarce on Sundays."

"Only a Scotchwoman would have thought of



the Scripture," mused Miss Patty. "I must speak about it to Lavinia."

"Miss Patty, is your homesick little Scotchman still with you?"

"Yes, and by times he's just as homesick for oat cake and marmalade as ever. He and Lavinia have a pitched battle most every day and Mr. Laurie declares it's all that keeps the life in him.

"And who is in your skylight room?" inquired Bee.

"Her name is Mary Hoffner. Poor girl, her mother died the week before Christmas and that leaves her alone. She dresses in black but you won't see her to-night. She works down town in a big shoe house, and this is bargain week so she doesn't get home any night until after nine o'clock.

"Does she get extra pay for working overtime?"

"Not a penny. She has to wait on three customers at a time until she is so tired, her brain whirls, and all the while a floor-walker watching her like a slave driver. She will be so fagged out when she gets home to-night, she will hardly be able to drag herself upstairs to bed." Here Miss Patty opened the oven door and took out two little scalloped cakes which were to be tried before the large cake was put in.

*MOTHER MARGARET'S LETTER 35*

"I wouldn't buy shoes at such a store on bargain days—I wouldn't buy shoes there if I went barefoot," cried Bee, upsetting her whole pan of nut shells on the kitchen floor in her righteous indignation.

"Neither would I," agreed Miss Patty fervently, as the two ate the little try cakes; then beating the nuts and raisins into the batter Miss Patty poured it into the tins.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SKYLIGHT ROOM

LATE in the afternoon, when Miss Lavinia was occupied in the basement, Bee went to the bathroom on the top floor, thinking to shower her rose and fill the vase with cool fresh water. The door of the skylight room was open and Bee could no more resist looking in than she could help reading the open page of a story book. It was miraculously clean, this little room with its white bed so nicely spread. A few well-selected prints brightening the dull walls, the worn books in the tiny bookcase and a cover of beautiful needlework on the dressing case gave the poor shabby place, strangely enough, an air of home-like refinement. The only light and air admitted to the room came through the open door, and a small skylight which was now closed as the rain was beating steadily upon it.

“Working in a hot, suffocating basement all day long; sleeping in this shut-in box at night; sitting here alone on Sundays,” meditated Bee. “No clouds getting red at sundown—no birds

hopping around when one feels lonesome—no little plant to stand on the window ledge—no window.” Bee looked down at the vase holding her rose. It was a beautiful rose.

Late that evening, Mary Hoffner returned home, her garments sodden with rain, her whole body aching with weariness, and her heart so heavy it hardly seemed as if she could take another step; but the skylight room, poor as it was, meant home and refuge to her, and the thought of it nerved the poor girl to climb the long flights of stairs.

On reaching her room there came forth out of the darkness to greet her, the most delicate and delicious fragrance as from a garden in June, and when the surprised girl had a light, there was disclosed a deep crystal vase holding a beautiful white rose. The vase with the rose had been placed reverently before her mother’s picture on the dressing case.

Involuntarily Mary Hoffner turned her face upward to see if the flower had come down from heaven, but the skylight was closed.

“It is of thee, O Christ! Thy messenger has been in this place!” and with a warm sensation of joy, the first that had thrilled her heart in many long days, the friendless girl lifted the rose to her lips.

How much the white rose said to Mary Hoff-

ner at that moment ; how it cheered and strengthened and encouraged her fainting heart ; how it spoke to her of Christ's love and made his tender friendship clear to her ! If Bee could have known it all, her happiness would have been like that of the angels of heaven.

But Bee did not know. Tired with the happenings of the day, she had gone to bed early and was fast asleep, dreaming of Mother Margaret, Barney, and Will in the old orchard at home. Meanwhile her flower mission had its beginning in the skylight room, a small beginning it is true, but the greatest things always begin small.

## CHAPTER VII

### A MORNING OF SUNSHINE

“WHAT a good time we are having, Dr. Ellen!” and Bee gave that dignified young woman an affectionate hug, as she saw in her companion’s smiling blue eyes the reflection of her own happiness.

The two had come out to Central Park, intending to spend the morning in studying mummies, gems, illuminated missals, and other art treasures in the Museum, as William had desired, but a newly-painted board warned them that the Museum was closed for repairs, so they were at liberty to sit on a bench in the park and simply enjoy the sweetness of the pure morning air, the freshness of the green grass and the warm sunshine.

“Look at the sky, Dr. Ellen,” cried Bee, overjoyed at their escape from mummies and illuminated missals. “Watch those dimply white clouds melting away into the blue—ar’n’t they delicious?—and the trees coming out into such pale little leaves all crimplly and frilled—and just look at the grass!”

"I am looking," said Dr. Ellen calmly. "It is smooth green grass."

"But isn't it more green than common—or is it because my eyes are so tired of looking at brick and stone?"

"It is like Dante's grass, as green as freshly broken emeralds, and the trees and the clouds are like Dante's angels."

"Tell me about them, please, Dr. Ellen!"

"One of them discovered at a distance gradually discloses white splendors which are his wings and his garments. He comes in a boat of which his wings are the sails, and as he approaches it is impossible to look him in the face for brightness."

"The bright cloud angel—I see him coming through the blue now," cried Bee, lifting her face eagerly.

"Others have green garments and green fluttering wings."

"That is the trees with their young leaves."

"One has a pure face like the morning star sending forth quivering beams, and another touches the senses like the fragrance of a May morning. Can you think of the presence of an angel like the breath of violets?"

"Oh, how sweet!"

"Another is in garments dark as cinders but with a sword too sparkling to be gazed at."

"That must be night with a young moon. Tell me, Dr. Ellen, what is it like in Paradise?"

"Dante in his vision saw every one loving each other in Paradise as they were hating each other in Florence. That makes heaven, Bee,—always to be pitiful and loving and never to be hating any one."

"But some people are so disagreeable."

"There is all the more need of loving them."

"I can't love Miss Lavinia. I just hate her."

"Please don't hate Miss Lavinia, Bee! She is like a dash of spice in fruit cake."

"Yes, she is spice and Miss Patty is the fruit and cake and frosting. I love Miss Patty."

"What has Miss Lavinia been doing to stir you up now? Your rage never lasts over an hour."

"She carried the soft blue comfortable off my bed and brought in a horrid old red one as heavy as lead. I told her I wouldn't sleep under it if I had to buy a new one. Then she went meekly away and brought the pretty blue comfortable back, and that was a dash of cold water in my face when I had expected she would scold like a house afire."

"Can't you adjust yourself to Miss Lavinia's view-point, Bee? She thought somebody needed that soft pretty comfortable more than you did, and so she took it away."



"But from my view-point Miss Lavinia is a pirate."

"She means to be kind in her way."

"I should be killed with kindness if I had to live with her."

"You ran away, Bee, when Mary Hoffner was telling Miss Lavinia and Miss Patty about the white rose she found in her room one rainy night. Poor girl, she turned her face aside, but we knew that the tears were streaming down. It was the first bright thing that had come to her for months."

Bee flushed and gave her attention to a sparrow picking up crumbs.

"We must do something for that child," Miss Lavinia said, when I went up to help her with the room work, and there was a real quiver of softness in her voice. "She hasn't a friend or a relative that cares for her, now that her mother is gone. Patty must make her a birthday cake or something."

"Then she brought upstairs a soft new comfortable, a delicate blue all flowered over with pink roses, and spread it on the foot of the bed. It gave the prettiest glow to the room."

"Now," said Miss Lavinia with real satisfaction, "that friendless orphan can have roses to look at every day."

"That was nice of her," admitted Bee, quite

melted. "But why didn't she tell me she wanted my pretty comfortable for a friendless orphan. Poor Miss Hoffner—she never saw the roses at all. I am just as sorry!"

There was silence for a few moments, broken by the piping of a pair of chickadees and by the voice of a tiny maiden on a neighboring bench who was playing with her doll and singing in her childish treble: |

"Good morning, merry sunshine,  
Why did you wake so soon?  
You scared the little stars away,  
And shined away the moon."

"When I am with any one like you, Dr. Ellen, or Miss Patty," Bee resumed after a while, "I feel like being good, but when I am with Miss Lavinia, she is so unexpected and so aggravating, that before I know it, a whirlwind of fire just seems to carry me away and I am as wicked as ever I can be," and here Bee dropped her head on Dr. Ellen's shoulder.

"There is one Friend, the best Friend in the whole world, who is always with us, Bee."

Bee remained silent while the birds kept on with their music and the child with her singing:

"I never go to sleep, dear child;  
I'm always shining bright;  
But as the world goes turning round  
I'm hidden from your sight."

"He holds us so close that whenever he thinks to love or help any one, we begin thinking of it too."

"Truly?" questioned Bee softly.

"Truly. It was his heart of love beating into your heart that prompted you to leave the rose in Mary Hoffner's room that night."

"It was nothing but a flower."

"The flower was a message from Christ to the girl, and you were chosen out of the whole world to carry that message for him."

Bee looked thoughtfully away into the green distance where a flock of sheep were feeding under the trees. The new leaves glistened in the sunshine and swallows circled through the blue above as if keeping time to joyous music heard faintly in the distance.

The little girl jumped down from the bench and ran away as fast as her short legs could carry her. Dr. Ellen and Bee followed leisurely. Louder, clearer, and more triumphant grew the music. Bee measured her steps impatiently with Dr. Ellen; she wanted to run after the little girl. Suddenly over a green slope there burst into view a great host of children marching with banners. Some were dressed in white with wreaths of flowers, and some were singing and clapping their hands.

"What does it mean?" and Bee turned questioningly to Dr. Ellen.

"It is Paradise Gloria to these little children. They are the school children come out for their festival on May day, and the girls in white with veils and wreaths are the May queens. Bee, you don't know what it means to these children to be walking over the green grass in the sunlight under such a great big piece of clean blue sky."

## CHAPTER VIII

### BEE'S LETTER TO MOTHER MARGARET

MY DEAR MOTHER MARGARET :

Do you know how a rose-bush feels when all the roses are picked off from it and it is left just a scratchy brier-bush ? That's the way I felt when Miss Lavinia told me you were not coming. I think Miss Lavinia felt that way too and we had a scrap directly.

Afterwards I went downstairs to help Miss Patty with a nut cake and the postman brought your letter. As I read it, I could just hear the phœbe-birds and song sparrows singing like wild out in the orchard. O Mother Margaret, I can hardly wait to see you and Will and Barney and have a good swing on one of our apple trees.

If we had a sprinkling of robins and apple trees around our school I could enjoy it more than I do. The teacher doesn't like it because I don't love to read and study all the while. She says I won't even read a story book clear through, but I tell her it's because the people in story books are always going through such miseries ; and she says that's because I stop right in the middle of the book.

Wasn't I glad to see the Thirteenth of First Corinthians ? and everybody else was glad, too. I don't know whether it's the laugh in her eyes, or in her voice, but she cheers everybody up so and makes even Miss Lavinia as sweet as a stick of peppermint candy. Peppermint is Miss Lavinia's favorite because it reminds her of Miss Carlotta and the mint garden and her early home.

Miss Patty wants me to thank you for the box of maple

sugar which came when Dr. Ellen did. She and Miss Lavinia were so generous in dividing it around I don't think they had much left for themselves, and besides, Miss Patty made a maple sugar cake. She said the flavor of it took her right back to Glenchase and she could see her folks sugaring off as they used to. It's hard for Miss Patty to take her pen in hand, but as soon as she gets to it, she will write you a letter.

Maple sugar reminds me of chocolates—a week or two before I left school I set a trap and caught tonsilitis,—not seriously, but just a trifle, and they took me from my room-mate, Eloise Slocum, and put me to bed right away in a room with a nurse. I bore it meekly and the girls upstairs kept dropping down notes and things to me through a crack around the pipe. They dropped down chocolates, a whole box of them, and I put them under my pillow and fell asleep. The next morning when the nurse went to turn over my pillow and shake it up, you should have seen the mess—all those chocolates had melted. She didn't scold me a drop because I was sick, but if those girls didn't catch it. Now every girl in school has to take a cup of hot boneset before breakfast to keep off tonsilitis, and it is a dreadful punishment.

My room-mate, Eloise Slocum, was so glad to have me back again, and I was glad too. Eloise is a quiet girl and yet she is so jolly. I just simply love her.

Dr. Ellen bought me three new frocks as you told her to, one is a dark blue cotton with fine dots that will be useful for every day, then a pink and white gingham for afternoons, and the sweetest challie flowered with little roses and forget-me-nots to be made up with a blue silk guimpe for best. It will be a perfect love.

A week ago Sunday I went with Eloise Slocum to church and saw the most delicious hats. It made me think of Miss Carlotta's flower garden. One had a fringe of moss buds all around it with bunches of pink buds and leaves trailing down the back. It was what Eloise calls a confection. We could not notice the people very much because they wore so many

48      *BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN*

confections and fine clothes. It was as good as going to the opera.

I should like to go again but Dr. Ellen has asked me to go with her to hear some one down town on the East side. I feel awfully disapointed, but Dr. Ellen is so good I couldn't refuse to go.

Your child who loves you,

KATHERINE BARBARA KENT.

## CHAPTER IX

### ANOTHER LETTER TO MOTHER MARGARET

MY DEAR MOTHER MARGARET :

I went with Dr. Ellen as I promised this morning, but I was cross when Miss Lavinia happened in just as I was putting on my gloves and said that my hair wasn't braided smooth and that my new hat did not become me. I knew my hair was rough and that I looked worse than a fright, and that made me all the more uncomfortable.

Dr. Ellen had my braids to do over again, and she offered to let me wear her new hat. It is the sweetest dream, trimmed with soft satin ribbons of pale green and a wreath of white jasmine blossoms, but Miss Lavinia said it was the worse looking of the two with those "bobbers" hanging down behind. We both of us laughed till we cried, and neither of us cared which hat we wore after that, for it was getting late and we had to hurry.

It was the longest way down to Dr. Ellen's church and after awhile we came to a part of the city where the streets were narrow and there were Hebrew signs in the windows and Hebrew newspapers sold on the street corners, and whichever way we looked the streets were filled with a multitude of children. As we walked we had to be careful lest we should stumble over them.

"Not a tree, not a flower, nor a blade of grass anywhere," said Dr. Ellen sadly. "Poor children, they do not know how fresh and pure God is making the world these spring days."

Then Dr. Ellen told me that a friend of hers, a teacher down there, was not able to explain to her children what a tree was, because they had never seen one.



The Hebrew children were playing all kinds of games on the streets, because it was not their Sabbath. I never knew there could be such a place in New York. I thought most every one was a Christian, but Dr. Ellen says her pastor sometimes does not see a Christian all day long, excepting his housekeeper.

A policeman stood at the door of the church, and this seemed queer to me until we were inside, when I noticed the neat round patches of glass put on the stained windows where stones had been thrown. We were late, and the congregation were just singing :

"Take time to be holy,  
The world rushes on,  
Spend much time in secret  
With Jesus alone."

The minister was a tall, serious-looking man with dark eyes and a pleasant manner. Dr. Ellen says I should say a gracious manner. Dr. Ellen told me that his name was Thomas Joyce, and some people call him Thomas-à-Kempis Joyce, because he is a man of God. Every time the clock strikes the hour he bows his head in prayer, no matter who is with him. Dr. Ellen says his door is always open to the poor and needy, and he opens it himself lest he should turn Christ away.

The people were all nicely dressed, but in a quiet way, so that you could think about them more than their clothes. I could not help noticing their faces, so serious, as they listened, and after a while I forgot about looking around, and listened too. I was pleased when the pastor began to speak of the wild flowers. He said :

"God has a plan for the humblest wild flower growing by the roadside—how much more—He has a plan for you. For that very reason, dear child, sit still. Do you not know that God's heart is set on thee ? Christ Jesus will give himself no rest until he has finished the plan ordered for thy life."

These words seemed to speak directly to me, but I cannot understand about the plan, for everyday things just seem

to happen. I cannot tell you any more of Pastor Joyce's words only that when he had finished it seemed as if we were in heaven, or had been there.

You should have seen how heartily the pastor and Dr. Ellen shook hands with each other. Pastor Joyce seemed so glad to see Dr. Ellen there, and so eager to hear about her work. She asked him questions, too, about his health and work when we stood alone for a moment or two.

"Were you troubled at the empty pews this morning, pastor?"

"No, they were filled with angels."

"Can the church be kept up here?"

"I am always prepared for failure."

"How long can you endure it? Why do you stay?"

"How long will I last?—the question does not trouble me. I love the people. I cannot help living here," and, stepping aside, Pastor Joyce put his hand on a little child's head. If you could have seen the look he gave the child you would understand why his words make our thoughts shine.

"Pastor Joyce loves all the children," said one of the young people who gave us a greeting.

"Dr. Ellen," I questioned, when we were alone together, "how did you ever happen to join a church down there? How did you come to know Pastor Joyce?"

Dr. Ellen, who sat at the table writing, put down her pen and was still awhile, then she said slowly:

"When Pastor Joyce goes about the streets down there visiting the poor and the sick, Hebrew women point him out, saying, 'He is a Christ.' He did for me what Christ would have done. Every joy I have in life I owe him. Please do not ask me any more, Bee. I cannot bear it," and Dr. Ellen dropped her head on her arms and did not speak for a long while. When she went on with her writing her face was so drawn with pain that I feel like having a good cry whenever I think of it, but she did not weep a tear.

Dear Mother Margaret, we must never ask her about it again.

Your devoted child, BEE.

## CHAPTER X

DR. ELLEN MCGREGOR TO MISS EVELYN GUILLARD.

THE village of Glenchase with its clustering houses nestled among green hills, topped around with gnarled and twiggy apple trees, was a fair picture on a May morning like this when apple blossoms were pink against a silver sky. On the outskirts of the village, the Cure with its lawn, gardens, and fish pond roughened to sparkles by the fresh wind was not to be overlooked, while the varied blues and purples of distant mountains, and a flock of sheep in William Eldbridge's nearby pasture field completed in Miss Evelyn Guillard's consideration a gentle and friendly scene.

Miss Guillard with only a robin for a companion, was sitting on Miss Carlotta's sunshiny porch when the rural delivery brought her the following letter from Dr. McGregor :

MY DEAR EVELYN :

Late last evening your note came telling me that you were settled for the summer with Miss Primrose. To be sure it is a long walk to the Cure, but you will find the out-of-door exercise is what you need. Miss Primrose will be scrupu-

lously faithful in her care of you, and, in turn, you can help her in her flower garden, which will be wholesome exercise.

Bee is writing to Mother Margaret about all our gayeties in this bewildering metropolis—the glittering show of equipages we saw in Central Park last evening, our ride through the crush of Fifth Avenue on top of an automobile yesterday morning, and our frequent visits to the shops so gay just now with novelties and fresh fabrics for their spring opening. Best of all were the sails across the harbor to watch the shipping, see the waves curl and foam, and breathe this fine salt air.

To you, Evelyn, I will write of what your soul hungers to hear, the spiritual life; for in this great city there is underneath all the roar and whirl a deep undercurrent of religious life.

Do you remember the rainy Sunday evening when we were all sitting around the fire and Will read the article on the "Practice of the Presence of God," by Thomas Joyce? When he had gone through it once, Mother Margaret asked to have it over, and as he read it over again the very dusk seemed filled with brightness as you said, our thoughts were so shining.

I took Bee down to Pastor Joyce's church on Sunday and although she would have preferred to go with Eloise Slocum, she submitted without a murmur, only giving a wistful glance over to Fifth Avenue as we started downtown on an East Side car.

Bee's eyes opened very wide as we walked through the narrow streets thronged with children playing all manner of noisy games, and paled with fright at pitiful faces looking up at us through foul basement windows. Claspings my hand she held it tightly until we were safe within the church.

Thomas Joyce is a man whose heart is so a part of the eternal goodness that he does not change; consequently I was in no way disappointed by his ministry on this particular morning. Our souls were uplifted and strengthened as the pastor led us into heavenly places and we took hold of

54      *BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN*

those things which are a part of our real and imperishable life. The spirit of all his teaching is in these words :

*" God loves me now. God loves me now with all his heart. God is with us. God is in the midst of us. We are continually with our God. Heaven is here now. God is with us as much as He is in Heaven."*

Miss Evelyn read the words carefully and then lifted her eyes to the trees radiant with blossoms and young leaves, the green hills tenderly shadowed, the silver sky—the bending branch near by where a robin, fluffing its feathers, was trilling its joy in the May morning—the speech of all was the same, *" God loves me now. God loves me now with all his heart. "*

With a little sigh of content Miss Evelyn finished the letter.

Rest quietly, breathe deeply, and believe me,  
Your true friend,

ELLEN MCGREGOR.

## CHAPTER XI

### A CROWN OF REJOICING

*Dr. Ellen McGregor to Miss Evelyn Guillard.*

MY DEAR EVELYN :

I am not surprised to hear that Miss Carlotta has been scolding and sweeping the robin's nest out of that corner where the honeysuckle climbs over the porch. For years Miss Carlotta and the robin have been fighting over this particular corner of the porch, and I fancy that in her heart Miss Carlotta admires this mother-robin who is so set in her way. I am sure she loves you or she would never have brought out the sunrising quilt to put on your bed.

You ask to know more about Thomas Joyce. He is the only Protestant pastor among many thousand people, and he has a bad name for being kind and helpful—that is, it is bad for him. His door is always open to the poor and those in need, and he opens it himself lest Christ should be turned away. He is called upon day and night to visit the unfortunate, sick with every loathsome and infectious disease ; or it may be his work is in some sub-cellar reeking with filth, to pray with a sinner who must find God or die ; or he is called into a murderous back tenement, and while he comforts a dying one, fiends tear up the rotten boards in the black hallway so that he may never escape alive ; now it is to disarm an assassin with a smile and friendly greeting ; again to walk at midnight through streets where he needs the guard of an armed man while he searches for some poor lost lamb. For nearly twenty years this brave man has been working down there facing death in all manner of ways. God alone knows how much longer he can endure it.

Last evening Miss Lavinia announced that two young girls, in long rain cloaks, the one wearing a red rose and the other a white one, were waiting in the hall to see me. The callers proved to be Minna and Marguerite, two of Pastor Joyce's children, whom he had sent to invite us to their young people's meeting.

Mary Hoffner and Mr. Laurie, the young Scotchman,—

Here Miss Evelyn paused for a long while in the reading of her letter, and shivered slightly ; then stirred up the fire that was blazing in Miss Carlotta's ugly wood stove——

"willingly accepted our invitation to accompany us,"

the letter continued,

and Miss Patty, too, we dragged out of the kitchen. Miss Patty never can refuse a prayer meeting. We were about starting when Eloise Slocum came in to spend the night, and she begged to go with us. Eloise is a dressy girl, whose hands sparkle with diamonds, and yet she is hungry for better things.

The sweet, modest faces of Minna and Marguerite greatly attracted Bee and Eloise, and the ride downtown to the East side seemed all too short to make the acquaintance of these girls, whose outlook on life is so different from their own. Minna with the white rose, a refined, delicate-looking girl, supports herself by working in a publisher's uptown office. Marguerite, with the red rose suited to her cheeks, is being trained as a teacher.

The mist from the sea was thick in our faces, and we had to walk some distance through dark and slippery streets, recalling to my mind such a memory of grief, fright, and loneliness, that it was I who caught Bee's hand and held the dear child near to me until we were safe in the shelter of the church.

Shaking off the raindrops, we entered a chapel, cheerily

lighted, hung with pictures and filled with a company of interested, bright-looking young people, a garden of willing hearts. Here we were rebuked, as Eloise confessed afterwards, by the English these children used, and by the ease with which they carried on a service as sincere as it was beautiful.

The English is pure and well chosen because these children, being of foreign parentage, have been at the pains to learn our language carefully. As to their gift in prayer, which seemed to us so remarkable, the children are used to coming with their real needs, and a prayer means a talk with the dear Lord. Two-thirds of the children we saw there, Pastor Joyce told us afterwards, had been orphaned of father or mother; some had been persecuted for Christ's sake, and some had known that day what it was to be hungry and lack sufficient food. These children with their real needs come directly to the Heavenly Father as to a parent whom they love and implicitly trust.

"We thank Thee, dear Father, for the joy of our Saviour's love. Help us that we may feel the presence of God. Give us clean and pure hearts. Teach us, O Father, what is the meaning of a soul."

The children in their prayers were as brief as they were simple and sincere, but most impressive were the silent times when these young hearts in gentleness waited for the Holy Spirit to come near to them and touch them. As their hearts went out to God in their need, we could not but feel the Presence of Love meeting that need with tenderness and the waiting of that other company invisible who always behold the face of the Father in Heaven.

"Let us pray for Davy," said the pastor quietly but with tears in his voice, "Davy in prison. We have not watched over Davy and loved him as we ought to, or he would not be in prison to-night."

Several of the boys arose and made prayers for Davy, as also did Anna, the leader of the meeting. From some fragments of the Pastor's conversation afterwards we learned that Davy was a crippled lad, seventeen years old, with a mind of



unusual brilliance. His father and mother were drunkards, and Davy himself could neither read or write. Gathering about him a band of younger boys of the same bandit spirit as himself, they had raided a candy factory and so entered upon a life of crime.

I inquired of Pastor Joyce afterwards about the young girls who sat in the row with me, for I was much interested in their faces.

Hilda, the quiet, pure-faced girl who sat next and shared her hymn-book with me, had lost both father and mother and lived with a woman who would persecute her for coming to this service to-night.

Then came Rachel, whose passionate prayer was: "O Father, teach us what is the meaning of a soul!" Poor girl, her own soul was being born to her through heart-breaking loss and tribulation. It was a year since her mother died. The brother who had been their breadwinner was next taken away, and now Rachael and the little sister Goldie, with the help and encouragement of Paster Joyce, have nobly taken up the support of themselves and their helpless invalid father.

There is one more I must tell you about,—Mary, whose special grace is just gladness.

"Meet her at any time and under any circumstances," said Pastor Joyce, "and the same bright beam of cheer shines from her black eyes and dark-skinned face. I met her this morning when the mist from the sea and the heavy clouds made everything chill and dark. I caught the beam of her face before she saw me. She was coming down the street with the great company of toilers, men and women, boys and girls, pushing and struggling to get ahead of each other, their minds living in the midst of the whirl of the machinery before their bodies are there. Mary was quiet, bearing the push pleasantly, her face beaming. In the factory the smile beams on her bright face all day. It is a real part of her life. She has had the courage of gladness."

These are just ravelings of stories Pastor Joyce told me as we sat with him around his study fire after the meeting was over.

"These children in the Lord's hands have become the joy and crown of my work," he said in conclusion. "I love them."

"Will you come and see my mother?" Eloise was asking the pastor, as our interview came to an end. "She is an invalid and she needs these thoughts you have given us."

The pastor had given Eloise the comforting assurance that he would see her mother when Mr. Laurie, who had been waiting patiently his turn, begged in his Scotch accent if he might differ with the pastor in his translation of the Lord's Prayer, and gave his own idea of the meaning of certain Greek words.

Pastor Joyce, looking so white and tired, braced himself against the study door, and being himself a stubborn man, held on firmly to his own view.

"But you are a fine Greek scholar, Mr. Laurie," he admitted with undisguised admiration. "And you have been a divinity student—may I ask at what university?"

Each of our little party now gazed at Mr. Laurie in astonishment. He was a college bred man, we knew, but we had not thought of him as a divinity student.

"Edinburgh," Mr. Laurie replied in answer to the pastor's question, and was about to plunge into the argument with renewed vigor when Miss Patty pulled him away.

"I have been to prayer-meeting a great deal in my time, but I never heard church members pray like those children," said Miss Patty on the way home.

"If every one's religion was real like Pastor Joyce's religion, how different one would feel about prayer meeting," said Eloise thoughtfully.

"What a chance I have missed for an all night's argument," grumbled Mr. Laurie, and then added in a kind of awed voice—"Ah, but he is a great teacher."

Dear Evelyn, if you don't have a relapse after this long letter I shall be sure you are better. Rest quietly, breathe deeply, and love your neighbors, particularly Miss Carlotta.

Your true friend,  
ELLEN MCGREGOR."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MCCRYSTALS

THE large express box was marked so plainly  
*Katharine Barbara Kent*  
that Bee lost no time in cutting the strings, opening the wrappings and lifting the cover.

"Apple blossoms!" she cried, breathless with the surprise. "A whole box full—branches and stems and little gray leaves—delicious! This is just like Mother Margaret—but isn't she a dear?"

"She certainly is!" assented Dr. Ellen, helping to unpack the box.

"And here is a fat letter, and a cunning little purse inside of it—and oh, my sakes alive! there is money in the purse," and Bee shook out triumphantly three five-dollar bills.

Joyously excited, Bee now sat on the floor with the heap of apple blossoms trailing perfume all around her while she read the letter aloud.

"Now listen to this, Dr. Ellen, Mother Margaret went to the farthest corner of the orchard to get the pinkest blossoms from the sour apple tree, the one you know that always sets your teeth on

edge—and old Barney stood by wagging his tail all the while she packed the box, and at the last minute Will thought about the purse—oh, but the fun we're going to have."

"You should put some of the money in the bank for a rainy day," advised Dr. Ellen.

"But, Dr. Ellen, people sometimes lose money they put in banks," said Bee, considering the crisp, new bills. "I don't want to lose this money. I want to spend it and have a good time, and then be ever so rich thinking about it. Isn't this a rainy day? It just pours."

Dr. Ellen sighed gently. She knew how useless it was to argue with this headstrong girl.

"This branch must go to the skylight room," and as Bee went on rapturously, arranging the flowers, she stopped every now and then to bury her face in the pink and white blossoms and inhale their fragrance. "Each one at the table is to have a bunch, and Miss Patty must have that blue and white pitcher full of them for her basement window; it will brighten up that dull, old place—and we can have this glass bowl filled for us—and, Dr. Ellen——?"

"Yes, Bee."

"I want to carry all the rest to James McCrystal."

"You cannot go out in this pouring rain with your sore throat. Who is James McCrystal?"

"He is an Irish boy with red hair and freckles. His mother sews for Miss Lavinia and Miss Patty, and I have seen James when he has been in on errands. Annie lives on the same floor with him. It's a respectable tenement, four flights up, Miss Patty says."

"Oh, if he has freckles he must have the apple blossoms," remarked Dr. Ellen, dryly.

"Dr. Ellen, his mother sews for Miss Lavinia and she has made over Miss Patty's best black gown as many as six or seven times. James comes in on errands sometimes. His father was taken with consumption when James was seven years old, and the boy nursed his father and took care of the children when he wasn't knee-high to a grasshopper, Miss Patty says."

"I should like to know James," said Dr. Ellen, with awakening interest in Bee's story.

"And you would like to know Mrs. McCrystal, too, Dr. Ellen. She has the prettiest color in her cheeks, and such good humor in her blue eyes, and she is always telling Miss Patty about her good luck. It's such good luck to have a clean tenement to live in and to be on the top floor where they can have a grand view and good air. And such good people as live in this tenement, all hard-working people who come in early and go to bed quiet like themselves. When the baby died, Mrs. McCrystal lost her place in the depart-

ment store, that was good luck, too, for now she goes out sewing by the day and gets better wages. The children who had the good luck to grow up are all old enough to go to school, and Mrs. McCrystal, Annie says, gives each of them four cents a week for washing dishes and doing up the work. If they should be careless their pay is docked, and this is a terrible calamity to those jolly little McCrystals.

“One day James had the luck to find a paper-covered pocket encyclopedia on the street, the first story book he ever owned in his life, and now he spends his evenings reading aloud from it to his mother and sisters. Isn’t that nice of him?”

“Mrs. McCrystal has another piece of luck in finding such kind people to work for who send the children so many presents, but these kind people don’t mind keeping her out late nights. The poor children can’t go to sleep for being so frightened, and they can’t stay awake for being so sleepy, and they have such trials! Last night, Annie says, a piteous wail came from their rooms, and, going in, the little McCrystals were found sitting together on the floor, crying as if their hearts would break. It was nine o’clock and no mother had come home, and they thought she was killed. Annie’s mother comforted them the best she could, and helped James put the little

ones to bed. The mother never reached home until eleven o'clock, but she told Annie's mother she had the best luck finishing a new gown so the lady could wear it to lunch the next day. Wasn't that cruel?

"Dr. Ellen, will you let me take the apple blossoms to the McCrystals, please?" entreated Bee.

"No," returned Dr. Ellen quietly. "I will take the apple blossoms and make the acquaintance of these McCrystals myself. You cannot go out of the house with that throat to-day. You must mind me, Katharine Bee."

"Must I?" questioned Bee, attending to the apple blossoms and letting Dr. Ellen's words slip as expeditiously out of one ear as they came in at the other.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

"THEY were all there," returned Dr. Ellen that evening, changing her street dress for a warm crimson wrapper, while Bee plied her with a dozen questions about the McCrystals. "Norah had just been punished for drinking up the milk intended for supper, and she was screaming like a soprano practicing for an opera. Kathleen, little woman, was standing on a soap-box finishing up the family ironing, while James was paring potatoes and reading aloud from the encyclopedia a story about cows. He was never in the country but one day in his life, and stories of pigs and chickens were to him like fairy stories."

"And what did they say to the apple blossoms?"

"They had never known about apple blossoms, and it was beautiful to see their wonder and delight. We put them in a broken-nosed pitcher and rusty tin can, and the posies cheered up that dingy room like pictures."

"And were the children glad?"

"Yes, Bee, and the pure blossoms were evan-



gels to these children. Norah ran directly away and washed her face, while Kathleen set up the dishes that had been left in the middle of the table since morning, and James scrupulously picked up some potato parings that he had dropped on the floor. I ventured now to suggest that we have a general clearing-up time. Kathleen loaned me one of her mother's work dresses, and the McCrystals entered into my scheme with the most gleeful enthusiasm. To be sure there were difficulties. The tea-kettle had lost both ears and leaked in the bottom, and the potatoes had been put on to boil in the kettle, so we had to heat water in a tin pail and some empty tin cans ; but Mrs. McCrystal had a fine supply of soap, and in an hour we made things shine."

"Wasn't it hard for you, Dr. Ellen?"

"James did the worst of everything, and besides, Bee, there were such a pitifully few things to clean that it didn't take long. When everything else was in order we made ourselves tidy, and I braided the girls' pig-tails, and tied them with fresh ribbons I happened to have with me."

"You happened!" laughed Bee.

"While I smoothed their braids, the little girls told me the story of their one treasure, a rose geranium that stood in a pot in the window. They had seen it first on the florist's stand,

where for days they had passed it with wistful looks. Once when a little girl, their mother had a rose geranium, and even now she was fond of the smell of the leaves, and this one was so nice and green, and the pot in which it stood was such a clean little pot ! For two weeks they saved every penny of their earnings, trembling always lest some one else should buy the little plant, but when they had twelve cents they ventured to the florist's.

“ ‘It was the one on the corner who lets us pick up rose leaves on the sidewalk,’ explained Kathleen, ‘and once, as sure as you live, he gave us a rose.’ ”

“ ‘A red rose with pricklers on the stem and the two green leaves,’ put in Norah.

“ ‘And James carried it to mother—it was the time she was in the hospital. But wasn’t he a proud one though !’

“ ‘You should have seen the faces of the children brighten up, Bee, as they told about this rose. It is still blooming in their hearts. When they went to the florist with their twelve pennies to ask about the plant, the good man threw off three pennies, think of that luck—and the little Mc-Crystals carried their rose geranium home in triumph to love it and tend it as if it were a whole flower garden.

“ ‘It was now grown so late that I told James

I never could get home in time for dinner, and I asked if I would be welcome to stay and take tea with them.

“‘Honest and true you will!’ said James, looking ready to faint away. At that moment there was in the cupboard a pinch of tea and a sackful of salt, and the salt I knew would be excellent on the potatoes which were boiling merrily in the kettle.

“I pretended to look out of the window at the fine view over the chimney tops. The storm had cleared and the sky was growing rosy with sunset while the lights of the city were sparkling out softly like long strings of fiery beads. The three children held a hurried consultation, and while I was supposed to be looking in the other direction I saw James seize the little plant quickly, lest his heart should fail him, and hide it. He was going to the florist where he could exchange it for money to buy bread.”

“How could you let him do it?” interrupted Bee with indignation.

“I don’t know,” returned Dr. Ellen gently. “It may have been because the lights of the city were now stretching out a great shining cross, and such a longing swept over me to eat salt and potatoes with these poor people and live with them and love them as Christ loved them.”

“Oh, you Thirteenth of First Corinthians,

you make me so tired," said Bee impatiently, "you are always looking around for some way to sacrifice yourself."

"It is selfish," admitted the Thirteenth of First Corinthians humbly. "In sacrifice one finds such real happiness."

"James seized the little plant," Bee now prompted, eager to hear the rest of the story.

"As James swung open the door something stopped him."

"Was it a mouse?" asked Bee, listening with breathless interest.

"Do you think it was a mouse?" and Dr. Ellen looked searchingly into the girl's roguish eyes.

"Please go on."

"It was a neat basket and in it was found a loaf of bread, a pat of butter, a bottle of milk, a package of chocolate, and a dozen fresh eggs. James reddened with surprise until you could hardly see his freckles."

"Was there nothing more?" questioned Bee, still eager for the story.

"James needed to borrow a spoonful of sugar for the chocolate and as he went out again there stood another basket, larger than the first, heaped up and tumbling over the parcels."

"It's better than a fairy book!" cried Bee, laughing and clapping her hands joyously. "Go on, Dr. Ellen!"

"We brought that basket in and the very first parcel we opened was loaf sugar, but the Mc-Crystals, never having seen sugar in square lumps before, did not know what it was."

"That's just our luck, honest and true it is," said James, as pleased as pleased could be when I gave him a lump to try.

"Then came tea and rice and more things than I can tell you about. I asked for a basin to make the chocolate in and James started out again thinking Annie's mother might have one to lend. By this time, having become a firm believer in ghosts, James opened the door cautiously and, finding the way clear as he supposed, he darted into the dark hallway and the next moment there arose the greatest racket and tumbling and groaning as if some one were being killed. Norah began to scream for dear life, while Kathleen and I rushed out to find James weltering in enough tin basins to start a shop. They were scattered over him and around him and under him, while a fine nickel teakettle sat on his head, a heavy bundle marked Mary Mc-Crystal lay across his chest and his feet were so tangled up in a clothes line and the basket that he could not move."

"What did you think of it, Dr. Ellen?" asked Bee, drawing a long, deep breath.

"I thought it was a very curious circumstance,"

and now Bee reddened under Dr. Ellen's steadfast gaze.

"In the bundle, we found two fine white table cloths and a handsome white counterpane. There was nothing in the room to correspond with them but the apple-blossoms."

Bee looked her pleasure but asked no more questions.

"Under my instruction Norah set the table, and with the clean dishes and pitcher of apple-blossoms made it look even pretty. Then Kathleen learned to make chocolate, and James scrambled the eggs and they were the proudest children you ever saw when supper was on the table. At that moment who should come in on us but Mrs. Crystal herself, her cheeks hot with hurrying so, and her eyes shining. The lady she was working for had been invited out to dine, so Mrs. Crystal was let off an hour earlier and the coachman bidden to drive the happy seamstress to her own door. Did any one ever hear of luck like that?"

"'Are you making me believe it's Christmas day?' exclaimed Mrs. McCrystal, looking in wonder about the room.

"Yes, Mrs. McCrystal," I explained, "it is Christ's day."

"As we seated ourselves around the table Mrs. McCrystal and her children made the sign of the

cross in humble gratitude, and I, too, bowed my head in remembrance of the dear Friend who hung for us upon the bitter tree.

"After supper I was obliged to hurry away, but Mrs. McCrystal would not let me go until James had written you a proper note of thanks. It must be a masterpiece, to judge from the time he spent writing," and Dr. Ellen handed to Bee the following letter :

RESPECTED MISS :

I thank you for the apple blossoms. I never saw any before, nor my mother neither, but I know about apples and like them very much.

Yours truly,

JAMES MCCRYSTAL.

"Isn't it more fun," said Bee, meditating.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ONE FALSE STEP

"You are as hoarse as a crow. Let me see your throat," Dr. Ellen asked a little later, as Bee was preparing to go out to a social with Miss Patty.

"Oh, my throat is all right," said Bee, opening her mouth with a grimace. "It scratches a little that is all."

As Dr. Ellen examined the throat carefully, she said with a troubled look :

"You may take off your shoes and stockings and go directly to bed."

"But, Dr. Ellen, I'll miss the fun. Miss Patty's frosting a cake to go."

"Miss Patty can go, and the cake can go, but you must go to bed at once." Dr. Ellen's tone was grave and firm.

Bee, pouting, began reluctantly to unbutton her boots, while Dr. Ellen went quietly on with her writing. Presently from the little grass plot under their windows there came floating up a sound of boyish laughter and then snatches of Scotch songs. Now they were pathetic, and



again they had a rich, vibrant ring to make the heart beat and dance as if all the Highlanders were fleeting past.

“My heart is where the heather blooms,  
Where the hawthorn scents the air ;  
My heart is where my true love roams,  
And fain would I be there.”

“Miss Patty was darning Mr. Laurie’s socks this morning,” ventured Bee.

“That was kind,” returned Dr. Ellen, her mind very much preoccupied.

“Mr. Laurie helped Miss Patty with the dishes so she could go to the social to-night.”

“That was good of him.”

“And now he has some of the students out there helping to bring in the clothes for Miss Patty, so she can go to the social. Isn’t he good?”

“He appears to be.”

“Do you think he loves Miss Patty?”

“He ought to love Miss Patty—but I shall not love you, Bee, if you don’t go to bed.”

An hour later, Dr. Ellen heard Bee tossing restlessly about.

“What is the matter, child? Is your throat worse?” and Dr. Ellen took the girl’s feverish hand in her own.

“It isn’t in my throat. It’s something on my mind. It’s the McCrystals.”

"Did you go out in the rain when I told you to stay in?"

"I didn't remember that you told me to stay in every minute of the time. Miss Lavinia scolded so about our putting the wet paper that came around the apple blossoms in the waste basket that I had to go out. Then Eloise was here, and planned how I should spend the money Will sent me. I wanted a beauty hat, and an enamel belt buckle, and a string of wax pearls just terrible, but Miss Patty came in and said she was so glad you carried the apple blossoms to the McCrystals. They fell so behind when Mrs. McCrystal was in the hospital they had not had much but salt and potatoes since. Eloise said she didn't think apple blossoms were very nourishing, and so we just had to get things. Miss Patty packed the first little basket you found and then she went out and helped us buy things. Annie advised us about getting the teakettle and tins, and the expressman around the corner carried them down to Annie's mother, and she set them at the door."

"You don't seem to realize, Bee, that you were disobedient."

"But, Dr. Ellen, it didn't rain a drop when we went out, and then all at once it poured like a deluge. Eloise didn't have her umbrella, and Miss Patty had gone home another way, and a

lady sat down on mine and broke it in two, right in the middle. I had one piece of good luck, anyway. That horrid old hat I hate, was drenched, and I won't ever have to wear it any more."

Dr. Ellen sighed, and then there was a little silence.

"Dr. Ellen, why do you think I was wicked?" Bee questioned in a voice that was now grown very hoarse. "I didn't even buy a box of chocolates, and I wanted them awfully."

"You were wicked, Bee, because you disobeyed me. That was the first false step. As your physician, I knew that you were in no condition to go out in this damp air."

"Mother Margaret always let me go out in the rain."

"It would not hurt you when you are well and strong, but now you are tired, and you haven't the vitality to resist a cold."

"Wasn't it good to send things to the McCrystals?"

"Yes, dear, it was sweet and good to think of it, but it was not wise to send so many things. The McCrystals are hard-working, self-respecting people, and you would soon make paupers of them."

"Miss Patty told us what to buy."

"Miss Patty is a dear, but she is only a child grown up."

"Oh!" said Bee, trying not to mind the stinging pain in her throat. "Are other people little children grown up? I wish I had known it before. I wouldn't have been half so afraid of them?"

Dr. Ellen went back to her writing. In the yard below there was the sound of boyish laughter, blending curiously enough with the flapping of the clothes and the stave of a Scotch song—

"The Campbells are coming, oho! oho!"

The students were having a great lark bringing in Miss Patty's clothes. They all loved Miss Patty.

Long after the household were perfectly still, Dr. Ellen bent over her writing; distant church bells were chiming musically the midnight hour, when there came a hoarse rattling sound that sent all the blood to her heart. Instantly she was kneeling at Bee's side.

"Dr. Ellen—it's my throat—I can't breathe—tell Mother Margaret—I was sorry."

## CHAPTER XV

### A BUNCH OF VIOLETS

FOR two long weeks Bee was shut into a sick room, where she had time to think over a number of things. As soon as she was able to bear the journey, Dr. Ellen brought her back, not to Mother Margaret, as Bee had hoped, but to the Cure.

"She must have plenty of fresh outdoor air," was Dr. Ellen's prescription. So the first morning a cot was made ready for the sick girl on one of the Cure's wide verandas. Here Bee was lying white and weak on her pillow, when the south wind found her out and brought her the refreshing, fragrant breath of sweet violets.

"Now make yourself dess as comfable," Katey, the stout German nurse, was saying persuasively, "an' I'll come for you after awhile. Now dess shut your eyes an' res'." The patient did as she was told for a moment, but opened her eyes directly the nurse's cap, apron strings, and clean gingham dress disappeared in the open doorway.

Bee was not left alone on the veranda, for no Cure patient was allowed to remain in the house who could by any means be taken out of doors, and this morning the Cure ladies were sitting out as usual, rolled in blankets, rugs and comfortables until they looked for all the world like a row of mummies. Each mummy had its feet buried in a symmetrical square box, and no one spoke a word, for hung in a conspicuous place was a card bearing this legend :

NO TALKING ALLOWED DURING REST-HOURS.

BREATHE DEEPLY.

Bee smiled as her glance fell upon this card, thinking what difficult reading it would have been for Miss Lavinia, and this called to mind how she had hated that poor lady and what bitter and hard things she had said against her. As it often happens in life after any new experience, Bee now saw things from an entirely different point of view. The sense of her own wilful and selfish disobedience which had brought such swift punishment was not more clear than her appreciation of Miss Lavinia's true worth as a friend during all those days and nights of pain. Alarmed lest the young girl's illness should prove to be diphtheria, half the boarders left their rooms empty, but no word of reproach came from Miss Lavinia. On

the contrary, Mr. Laurie and the students who remained, were made miserable if so much as a shoe squeaked or a door jarred to disturb the invalid.

Bee now remembered Miss Patty's tender and loving service which brought her the well-deserved title of "the angel on the stairs." There, too, was Dr. Ellen watching over her night and day, and Eloise sending in all manner of delicacies, and Mary Hoffner out of her poor earnings buying flowers—and the little McCrystals sending what was to them their whole conservatory, the beloved rose geranium. At this Bee swallowed a great lump in her throat. She was having a fit of penitence, and whenever she had anything, Bee always had it hard.

At the sound of music in the gymnasium the mummies quietly unrolled themselves from their chrysalis wrappings and went their ways to exercises, baths, and walks, leaving Bee to the company of the south wind and a tenderly gray sky that tucked in the whole world like a fleecy coverlet. Lying with eyes closed, the girl felt all at once something cool, soft, and fragrant falling on her lips and eyelids, and looking up she saw Dr. Ellen standing beside her laughing and showering down upon her a bunch of sweet violets which she held in her hands.

"I was just longing for them," the sick girl

cried, while a radiance like that of color came into her face. "You always know what I want, Dr. Ellen."

"Miss Evelyn sent these with her love," said Dr. Ellen, smoothing the girl's hair caressingly. "And how does my little girl feel this morning?"

"Oh, I am well," declared Bee, sitting up bravely. "I could walk to the woods and back only I feel a little trembly."

"I wonder you are not out running the lawnmower or helping the gardener with the flower-beds."

"Dr. Ellen," questioned Bee with a beseeching little quiver in her voice, "now, I am well again, why don't you scold me?"

"I couldn't scold such a scrap of a girl, Bee, if I could it wouldn't do any good."

Bee turned and hid her face in the pillow.

"What is it, Bee? Does your throat hurt?"

"Oh, no, it isn't my throat—it's my heart. Every one is so good to me. You and Miss Evelyn and Mary Hoffner and everybody—and I never do anything for anybody," cried Bee with a long shivering sob.

"Dr. Ellen," called Katey, "some one is waiting to see you."

"How dear Miss Evelyn was, to pick the violets!" said Bee, drying her eyes hastily when Dr. Ellen reappeared, "and such a lot of them!"



If God's flowers are words—just easy little words—I think violets must spell love.”

“The violet does bring us thoughts from heaven, child.”

“Dr. Ellen,” called Katey, “dis telegram mus’ haf an’ answer.”

“Will there be time enough to talk this time?” questioned Bee, laughing, when the flutter of Dr. Ellen’s white gown appeared again.

“What is it, Bee?”

“Will you ask me to do something hard for you—the hardest thing you ever can think of?”

“Are you willing to take a room-mate? A telegram has just come from Eloise’s mother. She engaged the room you are in two months ago and there is no other place to put her.”

“She may object to me.”

“No. The room is large and she expected some one would share it with her. She does not like to be alone.”

Bee turned her face away. Once or twice she had spent her vacations with Eloise and she knew a little about Mrs. Slocum.

Dr. Ellen, picking up a card hidden among the blossoms, began reading these words which Miss Evelyn had copied :

“I feel as weak as a violet  
Alone with the awful sky,  
As weak yet as trustful also,

For the whole year long I see  
All the wonders of the faithful nature  
Still worked for the love of me.  
Winds wander and dews drip earthward,  
Rains fall, suns rise and set,  
Each whirls, and all but to prosper  
A poor little violet."

"Dr. Ellen," called Katey, "der iss forty people a waitin' to see you."

"Oh, Dr. Ellen," and Bee caught her hand as she was hurrying away. "I will do anything for you."

"Even to enduring Mrs. Slocum?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, Bee."

Left alone, Bee read over the message from Miss Evelyn once more. It was a rich, new idea that winds, dews, rains, suns, and even the earth itself had been whirled around to help the one violet which lay in her hand so weak and helpless, and yet with all its sweet life was breathing to her of God's love and care. The thought eased the girl's troubled heart like balm.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A FLOWER MISSION BOX

THAT afternoon there might have been seen coming down the street a girl with a stern expression upon her face which deepened occasionally into a frown. Her dark hair was tied with stiff little ribbons, and she carried a basket on her arm. Her skirts as she walked rapidly along, had an energetic swing.

"Myra Fuller!" cried Bee with delight, when the girl with the stern expression and troubled frown appeared on the veranda. "If I am not glad to see you!"

"I am just as glad to see you," said Myra, smiling. Myra had friendly dark eyes and a dash of rich color in her cheeks. When she smiled she was really handsome.

"Were you afraid to come up here, Myra?"

"Yes, I was."

"I thought so when I saw the expression on your face."

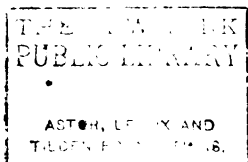
"I stopped to ask Dr. Ellen."

"You prudent girl."



A GIRL WITH A STERN EXPRESSION

*p. 84*



"And I brought you a basket of wood violets. I couldn't pick any till after school."

"And ferns and sprays of maidenhair!" exclaimed Bee, looking with delight into the basket. "How I wish I could have gone with you. Is it pleasant out in the woods? Do things smell as woodsy and spicy as ever?"

"The woods are just about the same. Shall I ask Katey for some water to put these things in?"

"Yes, and bring out a ball of twine, please, Myra. We will tie the violets in bunches."

"Oh, it seems so good to see you, Myra," Bee went on, when that energetic girl returned with a large bowl of water and the desired string. "How is our Loyal Temperance Legion getting on?"

"We haven't had any meetings in a great while. Bessie went away, so Helen is president now, and Alice is secretary, but she never has a chance to write a letter."

"Isn't that too bad?"

"And Henrietta is organist."

"Have they an organ?" asked Bee in surprise.

"No, they haven't an organ, but Henrietta was organist, before her folks moved here, and so we thought she better keep right on. I am treasurer."

"Is there any money in the treasury?"

"Not any that I know of."

"I wish we could start a flower mission," said Bee. "I've thought a great deal about it since I've been sick and people have brought me so many flowers."

"I don't see how we can start anything without money," said Myra, who was a practical girl.

"Dr. Ellen says sometimes the express companies carry flower mission packages free. Alice might write to them."

"It wouldn't do any harm to write," said Myra, tying up the last bunch of violets.

"How sweet they look!" cried Bee, regarding the neat row of bunches admiringly. "Myra, I have some money of my own. I believe I will send a box of violets to-night. Miss Evelyn sent me some sweet violets, and we could put the ferns in flat."

"I can get you some more violets. The pasture back of the house is blue with them."

"Oh, Myra, could you?" said Bee, drawing a long breath, and then she told Myra the story of her visit to New York and the pathetic sight of the little children playing on the glaring stony streets with never a bit of green grass to walk over, or a flower to pick, or a tree to rustle its leaves for them.

"I'll pick some leaves with the violets this

time," said Myra, "they are so pretty with the blossoms. Postscript will help me."

"Do you mean Anne Primrose?"

"Yes, Anne Add-a-line. Don't you remember the girls used to call her 'Postscript' at school sometimes, and don't you remember her brother Henry, the greatest tease? Their mother died and their father moved away, and Anne and Henry were left with their Aunt Carlotta. They help her with the mint and the sage. Anne just loves to go after wild flowers, and we'll bring you a lot of violets."

With the help of Dr. Ellen and her two faithful friends, Myra and Postscript, Bee's first flower mission box was packed with fat bunches of violets that evening, and sent out on a late train to New York. In the box Bee tucked a little note saying that every violet carried a message of love. That night Bee dreamed that she was walking the narrow, grimy city streets down there on the East Side, with her arms full of violets, and little children came crowding around her clamoring for the flowers, begging for just one violet, one leaf, and when there was no longer a blossom or even a green leaf to give, the despair, the desolation that settled on all the faces around her was so pitiful that Bee could no longer see for tears, and she felt her heart breaking with the great hungry longing to help some one.



Now, in her dreams an angel came to her whose presence was like the fragrance of violets, and led her and the little children into a garden filled with violets, pinks, lilies, sweet alyssum, and all manner of fragrant blossoms. And in the clear light, Bee saw the fragrance of flowers changing into other angels, who took the children by the hand, and they walked on in happiness, and no one injured any plant, nor so much as shook a drop of dew from a flower's cup.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE WINTERGREEN GIRL

WITH rest and quiet, Bee recovered her strength rapidly, but as she was still in need of medical care, Dr. Ellen insisted that she should remain for some time at the Cure.

On this particular May morning, Bee sat on the front steps of the Cure drinking in the joy everywhere about her. Birds were filling the air with their shrill delight; the syringa bush was white with satiny perfumed blossoms, and peonies, red and white, were unfolding their huge balls of bloom on the lawn. A morning of clearer sunshine never combed the dew sparkles out of the grass, and Bee herself was radiant as she read over the letters in her lap. The first one was from the manager of the Express Company in regard to sending flower mission boxes:

DEAR MADAM: Replying to your favor of the 20th inst., the rule is:

Flower mission baskets weighing less than 20 lbs., may be carried and delivered free of charge when addressed to charitable institutions or organizations within the delivery limits of the cities reached by this company.

Yours truly,

E. J. BIRD.

This letter set open the door for their flower mission work, and as Bee read it she drew a deep breath of thankfulness. The next letter was from Pastor Joyce in return for the violets :

"Thank God," wrote the good man, "for the loving flowers. As I laid them in the hands of the children, I felt I was placing each one in the hand of Christ."

"Isn't this glorious!" cried Bee, wishing that Dr. Ellen were near to share her joy. But no one appeared but a little girl with a large basket, who stopped timidly to ask Bee if she would buy some wintergreens. The bunches of green leaves were tied up neatly, and looked tempting.

"How much are they?" asked Bee, necessarily prudent now because her purse was low.

"A penny a bunch," returned the girl, resting her basket on the steps.

"Only a penny a bunch! That isn't much. It must have taken you a long while to gather them?"

"It did," replied the wintergreen girl, sitting down beside her basket. She had a mop of light hair pushed back under a cap of faded green. Her dress, of green woolen stuff, was also faded, and her shoes sadly worn with trudging over a country road. Bee liked the girl because she had freckles, and also because there was a suspicion of fun in her solemn blue eyes.

"Are you related to Lucy Amelia?" she asked, scrutinizing the wintergreen girl more closely.

"I'm her sister, Grace Mary."

"I remember now, Lucy Amelia did have some brothers and sisters."

"There's eleven of 'em," returned the wintergreen girl, gazing over the meadow across the way as if the matter were entirely impersonal.

"I'd give a million dollars if I had a little sister," said Bee, meditating. "I have a stranger for a room-mate now. Did you ever have a strange room-mate?"

"Mercy, no!" exclaimed Grace Mary. "It must be dreadful."

"When I was at school," continued Bee, "I roomed with a real jolly girl, her name was Eloise Slocum. Now, I have her mother, and she—well, she's different. Dr. Ellen says it takes a great deal of religion to get along with different kinds of room-mates. Grace Mary," asked Bee, suddenly overtaken with missionary zeal, "do you have much religion?"

"I don't know," returned Grace Mary, with a frightened look in her blue eyes. "I don't think I am old enough to have much. I'm only eleven."

"Do you go to church regularly?"

"Some of my relations go every Sunday, but I can't go in these clothes," and the wintergreen

girl looked down soberly at her worn, rusty shoes. "I tried it one Sunday, but I won't again. The girls stared at me so in Sunday-school, and when I was put in a class they moved clear up to the other end of the seat for fear they'd touch me. I won't go again—anyway not till I get some clothes. That's why I'm diggin' my finger ends off pickin' wintergreens, an' Ethel Muriel's helpin' me."

"Is Ethel Muriel your sister? What a pretty name."

"Yes, we all have them. Mother says it's a good deal to provide double names for such a large family. Ellen Melodia an' Celia Celestia had the prettiest ones, because they're the oldest; but the baby's name 's just as sweet, that's Trillia Sylvia. Dr. Ellen thought o' that because Sylvia means woodsy, an' we live right on the edge o' the trillium woods. Can I carry my basket around the verandas now?"

"Of course you can. I'll take five bunches myself. Please stop at the room in the wing and get my portemonnaie as you go along. I would go in myself, but it makes my room-mate nervous to have me going in and out so much. My portemonnaie is a little gray one, and you will find it on the table or in the middle bureau drawer. And, Grace Mary, look in my closet, on the left-hand side, and get a pair of shoes standing there. They're real good, but they squeak a little and

make my room-mate so nervous I can't wear them any more, so you can have them just as well as not."

"Can I pay for them with wintergreens?"

"Now, that's a fine idea—a pair of shoes for twenty bunches of wintergreens. There's a hat, too, if you want to buy it with wintergreens. It's been rained on real hard, but your mother can make it over as good as new. Lucy Amelia's mother always was famous for fixing up things. Remember, it's the left-hand side."

When the wintergreen girl returned after some little time with her empty basket, there was a queer pucker about her mouth and traces of tears on her cheeks.

"What is the matter?" asked Bee, wondering. "Couldn't you find my portemonnaie?"

"'T'wasn't where you said 't'was," returned the wintergreen girl reproachfully. "'T'was on the floor."

"Did my room-mate talk to you?"

"She most talked my arms and legs off as I was creepin' round dark corners lookin' under the bed and bureau an' everywhere. An' when I went into the closet—didn't you tell me left-hand side?"

"Yes, I said left-hand. Wasn't it on the left-hand side?"

"I don't know," sobbed Grace Mary, sitting down and drying her eyes on a clean cotton hand-

kerchief with a pink border. "It was the wrong side, whichever it was, an' such a mess as I got into—oh, mercy me,—she shook me—an' asked me if I wasn't ashamed carryin' off her Paris hat an' best shoes, an' she called in the nurses an' told 'em, an' they said that come o' lettin' little girls go around to the rooms an' they scolded awful an' took me to Dr. Ellen."

"And what did Dr. Ellen do?"

"She said 'Grace Mary' as sweet as 'honey-love,' an' said Ellen Melodia was named after her. She said she believed every word I said, but the others wouldn't—so I can't come here any more—an' I had it all figured out how I'd earn a blue prunella dress an' a white waist an' a pink shirtwaist an'—an' shoes—" and poor Grace Mary broke down and cried as if her heart would break.

"Never mind, Grace Mary," said Bee, taking the weeping girl's hand gently in her own. "I was the only one to blame, and I will make it right—and you can buy my pretty blue gingham with the white guimpe with wintergreens. It's getting too short for me."

"Is it—is it pretty—as Henrietta's?" questioned Grace Mary, still sobbing.

"It's ever so much prettier."

"But maybe wintergreens will give out."

"Then you can bring wild flowers."

"Oh, I will—I'll bring a lot."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A HUMBLE TEACHER

"DR. ELLEN, Mrs. Slocum says I don't know enough to superintend a flower mission, and Postscript thinks she doesn't know enough, and Myra says she won't. What are we going to do?"

"Do the best you know how," replied Dr. Ellen, giving Mink's fat sides a flick with her whip. She had an errand this morning in a neighboring village and Bee was asked to go too, because the roads winding through wood and field were so pleasant in this May weather.

"But I don't know how, Dr. Ellen."

"Bee, you don't have to work alone. You have a Friend who works with you."

"Do you think he really cares—really?"

"Bee, the Heavenly Father knows the needs of Pastor Joyce's little children down there in those burning streets better than we do. He is even now making the flowers to spring up and bud and bloom for them; but he wants you to work with him and help him."

"Dr. Ellen, here is a door-yard full of flowers,



and no one living in the house. Can I stop and gather some for the flower mission?"

"I don't think so," returned Dr. Ellen, laughing at Bee's zeal. "The people may only be away for a few hours. I wouldn't begin a flower mission with highway robbery."

"It's terrible how I am tempted to steal since I began this flower mission," said Bee despondently. "I never used to feel that way but now I am so greedy for flowers I want every one I see."

No one understands the mystery of the simplest flower, how it comes to bloom with its golden heart, curved petals, and delicate perfume, neither does any one know the mystery of a human soul, how it stirs and stretches out and unfolds a little at a time. Dr. Ellen was thinking of all this but she only said:

"This might be a nice place for our lunch. The wintergreen is so thick in this bank of moss and there is plenty of grass for Mink. I am sure Mink is hungry."

"Mink is always hungry, just like me. Nice old Mink," and Bee patted his nose while Dr. Ellen unchecked that faithful horse and let him munch in the thick grass by the wayside. "I wonder what we have that's good to eat," and while Dr. Ellen unfolded snowy napkins and laid them out on the green moss, the young girl investigated the lunch box.

"Sandwiches, hard boiled eggs—where's the salt—oh, here it is—cream cheese, custard pie, cookies—figs ; my, but isn't this a spread !"

"And hear the crickets sing !"

"They like the sunshine."

"Did you study about moss at school?"

"Haven't got to it yet," said Bee, throwing herself down in the velvet green. "What does moss say?"

"A great deal. There are hundreds of different kinds of moss, and they are all built on the plan of four, that is, the teeth of every little moss cup number four or some multiple of four. One kind has a hundred and twenty-eight teeth. And the moss is so faithful to do its work, so patient, and meek. When it is trodden under foot it keeps brave and green just the same."

"Little teacher," said Bee, putting her cheek down to the warm, fragrant moss, "I will come to you and learn."

"And here is another teacher," said Dr. Ellen, picking up a clover leaf and spreading it out in the palm of her hand. "See how perfect it is, even to the smallest notch and marking of a clover leaf pattern. God and the clover leaf worked the pattern out together. God has a pattern for you and your flower mission work, Katharine Bee, but you must be obedient. You must work with him."

"Does a clover leaf know anything about obedience?"

"Every clover leaf and star and raindrop knows obedience—that makes them strong and beautiful and glad."

"I like to be good and obedient once in a while," meditated Bee, "but I can't keep it up steady all the while. I get tired."

"You have as much idea of obedience, Bee, as that red squirrel frisking along the fence."

"Let's talk some more about flower missions," said Bee, throwing a last year's acorn to the squirrel.

"Did you ever hear the story of the beginning of flower mission work, Bee?"

"No, Dr. Ellen—will you please tell it to the red squirrel and me?"

"It was fifty years or more, the Earl of Shaftesbury and Baroness Burdett Coutts thought of sending flowers to the poor and sick in London. News of it came across the water and a flower mission was started in Boston where a church was opened to receive flowers. A sick girl in Louisville, Jennie Cassady, heard of it, and while she could not leave her bed she could write letters and notes, and she started a flower mission of her own. One day a friend driving with Frances Willard through the streets pointed out Jennie Cassaday's windows and told her of her mercy

work. Frances Willard at once asked to visit her, and she placed hundreds and thousands of helpers in touch with her, so that Jennie Cassaday's work became known all over the country. There were many others with the love of Christ in their hearts who entered upon this work of carrying flowers to "God's poor," as the little children of Jacob Riis called them.

"Now those who carry flowers to the sick or distressed, find out their needs and help them in other ways, with food or books or clothing, so that countless deeds of relief work or mercy work go on with the flower mission. Do you see, dear child, how it is all God's thought? It is a great thing to work out his thought with him in your flower mission, humble as it may be."

"It is a great thing—a great deal bigger than I am," said Bee, looking bewildered. "How will I know that I am working with him?"

"Just as soon as you try to be of service, he will turn the hearts of people to help you, and all things will work together for you. All things."

"All things?" repeated Bee, looking incredulous.

"Yes, all things, but the Lord expects you to do what you can for yourself first. You must work yourself or it is not possible for him to help you."

“ These bits of green things work steady every day, winter and summer,” said Bee, looking down at the faithful, patient moss. “ Well, I can try.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### FRIENDS AND HELPERS

THE next flower mission day, a slender girl appeared with cheeks like May pinks and soft light hair braided in long plaits down her back. It was Postscript Primrose, and she brought from Aunt Carlotta's garden a basket of lilies of the valley, which Miss Evelyn had helped her to pick, very sweet and still fresh with the morning dew. With Postscript came Myra Fuller, bringing a large bunch of fragrant yellow fleur-de-lis from Grandma Amesbury's garden.

"And I didn't know where one flower was coming from," exclaimed Bee with thankfulness, putting the blossoms in water. Then she opened her portemonnaie and showed the girls a crisp one-dollar bill Mrs. Slocum had unexpectedly given her for the flower mission work.

"Everything that goes into this purse, Myra," said Bee, "is flower mission money, and you girls must help me this morning buy boxes, wax-paper, string and a lot of things."

A little later the three girls might have been

seen standing before the counter in the village dry-goods store inquiring for boxes.

"What kind of boxes?" asked Mr. Strawbridge, the polite merchant.

"Any kind," answered Myra, blushing furiously.

"Both kinds," suggested Postscript, standing up quite stiff, but growing pink as an anemone.

"Empty boxes for a flower mission," explained Bee, outwardly courageous, but inwardly trembling with fright. She felt sure that Mr. Strawbridge would look cross and say there were no empty boxes this time of year; they needed them, every one, to pack winter woollens in; besides, what right had little girls to start a flower mission and bother busy people for boxes, anyway?

"Where do you send your flowers?" asked Mr. Strawbridge, leaning over the counter. His voice was very kind.

"We send them to New York—to the children down on Broome Street," returned Bee, devoutly hoping that Mr. Strawbridge would approve of Broome Street.

"Oh, I know about Broome Street," said Mr. Strawbridge, his face lighting up with interest. "I visit the missions down there every time I'm in the city." Going to the back of the store, Mr. Strawbridge presently came back with two large shirt-waist boxes and tied them together.

"How much are they?" inquired Bee, for the other girls had to hurry away to school.

"Nothing, I will save boxes for you every week, if you like."

"How kind you are!" cried Bee, quite melted with gratitude.

"You are kind to take them," said Mr. Strawberry politely. "It saves us the trouble of burning them."

Bee picked up her boxes and now went to the stationer's for wax paper. Mr. Brooks, the stationer, was an elderly gentleman, who wore gold-bowed spectacles, and sold books and confectionery.

"Ho! ho!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands together pleasantly. "Why, a flower mission is a good thing—you make two people happy where only one was happy before," and as Mr. Brooks weighed the wax-paper he put on much more than the amount Bee was paying for.

"I have some more wax-paper," continued Mr. Brooks, still rubbing his hands together pleasantly, "it came over candy boxes. Oh, here it is, a drawer full of it," and you can have it just as well as not. I'll save it for you after this."

"How good you are!" exclaimed Bee, again overwhelmed with this generosity. Laden with her boxes, which seemed very heavy, and taking



up the wax-paper, she now went on to the printer's to buy wrapping paper, and to see about the tags which Dr. Ellen advised her to have printed and pasted on every box.

Mr. Merry, the printer, who was also the editor of the village paper, smiled with his eyes as Bee unfolded her plans for a flower mission. Mr. Merry was taking notes of possible paragraphs while he smiled. Bee could not make out what he was laughing at, but she thought it must be something pleasant, so she laughed too.

"I wouldn't buy any wrapping paper, Miss Kent," the printer advised when they had done laughing. "I have a lot come round my papers every week I would be glad to give you to get rid of it."

"Thank you, Mr. Merry," said Bee, thinking this good luck was really something to laugh about. "How much will it be for the printing?" And now she took out her portemonnaie seriously.

"The printing?" repeated Mr. Merry, still laughing with his eyes, "oh, I will not charge you anything for the printing. I want to help the flower mission."

"Thank you, Mr. Merry—how good everybody is," said Bee, taking up the bundle of heavy wrapping paper Mr. Merry had provided for her, and the wax paper and the boxes which seemed

to gain in weight every time she lifted them. Bee now went to a grim-looking place whose walls were covered with shovels, pitchforks, axes, chains, and padlocks. This was the hardware store. Bee took her stand by a pillar festooned with more chains, hooks, rollers, and hatchets ; over her head were galvanized pails.

Bee remembered that she wanted a pail for her flower mission, and her eyes were turned upwards with a kind of rapt gaze when Mr. Robbins, the clerk, appeared. The girl inquired timidly the price of pails and was told that this particular kind were twenty-eight cents. She paid for it and Mr. Robbins asked if it should be sent.

"No, I want to use it right away," Bee never liked to wait for things. "How much is string?"

"What kind of string?"

"Something good and strong," and then Bee explained about the flower mission.

Good stout twine was fifteen cents a ball and Bee wanted three balls, so that she and Postscript and Myra might each use one when they were hurried tying up boxes.

"Forty-five cents," the clerk said.

Bee opened her little portemonnaie and took out the one crisp bill. Forty-five cents seemed a great deal to pay but the flower mission could not go on without string. Mr. Robbins was looking

out of the window through an engaging prospect of dust-pans, coffee-pots, and tin sprinklers.

"I have a little money put away for times like this," remarked Mr. Robbins, addressing the dust-pans. "I will pay for the string."

"Pay for the string!" Bee was at first bewildered, and then she asked softly. "Do you have a Lord's pocketbook?"

"Yes," said Mr. Robbins, looking at Bee and such a beautiful smile came into his kindly eyes that the young girl knew he understood flower missions and everything.

"I should never have expected to find any one so good in a hardware store?" Bee wanted to say, but she knew she was going to cry, so she picked up her pail and twine and went out of the store without saying a word.

Gathering up the other packages she had left outside the door, Bee now faced a tempestuous wind which had come up suddenly in this hillside village. Tugging her heavy bundles, she could hardly walk against the gale and upon turning a corner the wind took her cap away and her breath away and loosened the string around the shirt waist boxes so that they came apart and the covers tumbled off. Bee now discovered a dozen smaller boxes which had been packed inside and these went in every direction.

"If anybody thinks it's easy starting a flower

mission, I wish they would try it," gasped Bee, sitting down to regain her breath and to consider the situation.

It was just then that Comrade Hayes came along. He was a veteran soldier, very lame, who walked with a cane that went click-a-ty-click on the sidewalk.

"Getting ready for battle?" asked Comrade Hayes, seeing Bee sitting by the roadside surrounded with bundles.

"Yes, Comrade Hayes, I am getting ready for a great battle with flowers," and then Bee explained about the flower mission.

"Now, my wife," said Comrade Hayes, clearing his throat, "my wife—ahem—she has a garden full of posies—ahem—fine ones they are. If you'll go up to our house—ahem—she'll give you all you can carry."

"I've got more than I can carry now," said Bee, looking around mournfully at her boxes and bundles, "but I thank you ever so much, Comrade Hayes, and I will come sometime."

"I declare," said Bee, as Comrade Hayes went on click-a-ty-click down the street, "I could just cry, everybody is so good, and I should never have found it out if I hadn't started a flower mission."

At this moment who should come jogging along but the village doctor.

"Bee Kent!" he shouted. "What are you doing there—the ground is damp—where is your cap?"

"The wind blew it away and I've got so many bundles I can't get home."

"Well scramble in—scramble in. I'll take you along with me."

Riding along with the doctor, Bee confided to him the story of her flower mission and told him of the extraordinary kindness she had experienced that morning.

"I have some of the nicest pansies," said the doctor, pointing out a splendid bed as they passed his garden. "Send your flower children up for them. It's good for them to be cut." The Doctor was a kind-hearted man who loved flowers and little children, and all summer long quantities of flowers were contributed from his garden to the flower mission.

"Dr. Ellen," said Bee when they were alone together. "What you said was true. All things work together."

"Of course it's true," replied the Thirteenth of First Corinthians.

## CHAPTER XX

### TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

BEE's faith was so strengthened by the experience of the morning that she thought her courage would not fail again, but before the day passed there came fresh experiences in the flower mission work of a different kind.

In the afternoon, Myra brought a milk pan full of pansies from the doctor's garden, and the minister's pretty young wife sent a basket of the same velvety blossoms, all tied in nice little bunches. Alice brought blue forget-me-nots from the brook ; Helen, "wee crimson-tipped" daisies, which grew so thick in her door-yard ; and Henrietta a fine bunch of fuschias, geraniums, and heliotrope cut from her mother's conservatory.

Mrs. Slocum had gone out for a long drive, so Bee felt at ease to bring the girls into her own room, where she spread a sheet over the carpet, and they camped out for a jolly good time.

When Grace Mary came with her wintergreens, she also stayed to help, and Bee showed her how to tie up the pansies neatly, putting a bit of winter-

green with each bunch. While she was doing this, Myra was packing the peonies in a wooden box the girls had secured. Dr. Ellen had given them peonies, and Mother Margaret had also sent an armful of red and white beauties, carefully cut with long stems, to leave with each blossom the handsome glossy foliage. While Bee turned her back helping Grace Mary with the pansies, something happened, and it was this :

Myra, always a painstaking girl, innocently cut each peony stem in two, packing all the blossoms by themselves tightly together in the bottom of the box, and carefully placing the leaves on top. Bee was nearly frantic when she discovered how the peonies were spoiled, but she would not have hurt Myra's feelings by scolding for anything in the world, and then, scolding would never have put the stems together. Besides, at this moment something more serious occurred to distract her mind.

"Oh, my soul!" cried Grace Mary, making an ineffectual attempt to gather up the corners of the sheet, "look out the window!"

"What's the matter?" chorused the other girls.

"It's matter enough," said Bee, peeping out cautiously between the curtains. "It's Mrs. Slocum."

The little company were almost paralyzed by this frightful announcement, but nervously went

on with their work as the lady entered the room. Mrs. Slocum was a handsome, shapely woman, with a complexion like red and white porcelain, snapping black eyes, and dark hair waved from her forehead in a pompadour. Her hands glittered with jewels as she drew off her gloves.

"What is this?" she asked in a stinging voice, looking with surprise about the disordered room. It was strewn with boxes, nails, twine, wrapping paper, cotton—and flowers everywhere, in pitchers, in milk pans, tin pails, baskets, and even fruit jars. Meanwhile the plumes of Mrs. Slocum's Paris hat, which had such awful associations for Grace Mary, had set that little girl into paroxysms of alternate tears and giggles.

"It's just the flower children," Bee explained, catching her own breath and pushing a rocking chair towards Mrs. Slocum, as a peace offering. "We are packing——"

"You are handling those flowers entirely too much," interrupted Mrs. Slocum with an authoritative wave of her jeweled hand. Mrs. Slocum loved to superintend things.

"See what a tangle you have in this box," turning with displeasure upon Postscript, who in wild haste tumbled Alice's forget-me-nots and Helen's daisies all together. Postscript's lips quivered, and she began to cry.

"You have simply spoiled the pansies," she



added sharply the next moment, giving her attention to the milk pan where the pansies, drenched in water, had lost their velvet beauty. "Will you tell me why you soaked them in this way?" No one could answer this awful question, and Mrs. Slocum continued her investigations.

"What have you done to these peonies?" poking the tip end of her parasol into Myra's box. "Cut off the stems! What a shame! They are perfectly ruined!" and, shocked beyond all further expression, the lady sank into the nearest easy-chair, undid her feather boa, and took out her smelling salts.

"Shall I ring for a nurse?" asked Bee, trembling, while Myra's eyes filled with tears.

"Only hand me a glass of water—it is the hour for a drink—and I desire to keep all the rules of this institution."

It was a rule that all Cure patients should drink a glass of water an hour before meals, and it was now five o'clock. Bee usually forgot this as well as other rules, but at this reminder from Mrs. Slocum she hurried away after a pitcher of water. On presenting a glass to Mrs. Slocum, that lady insisted that it was not cold enough, and Bee was sent again. Meanwhile she was wondering how the flower children would ever finish their boxes in time for the expressman, who was coming at half-past five.

Being refreshed with a glass of water, Mrs. Slocum was enabled to continue her disapproving observations of the flowers which the children in their confusion were trying to put out of sight.

"What nonsense is this—packing flowers in wet paper and cotton? Don't you know that flowers need air?"

With a great effort at self-control, Bee remained silent, but she was beginning to grow hot.

"Why does the housekeeper allow you to bring all this rubbish into the house? See these stains where you have trampled flowers into the carpet! Such boxes should be packed out on the walk," pursued Mrs. Slocum ungraciously.

"We don't want to be walked over," returned Bee, all ablaze at last.

Meanwhile Myra, gathering up the sheet with paper, cotton, and flowers, poked them out of the window to Grace Mary, who had tumbled out some time before, and the other girls, gathering up their half-finished boxes, made their escape through a glass door that opened out on the lawn.

"It's for Christ's sake," replied Bee bravely.

"Then don't crush that lid down over those lilies. If you are doing the Lord's work, do it as it should be done."

"But isn't it dreadful?" whispered Myra, taking Bee's hand as they escaped together.

"The worst of it is, Myra, she is right. We really don't know anything about packing flowers."

"Then why couldn't she tell us in a polite way," reflected Myra. "She looks like a lady."

"Yes, she looks well enough," admitted Bee, "but she's never satisfied with anything. Eloise never can do anything to please her. Mr. Slocum never can please her. Dr. Ellen says it's one symptom of her disease."

"It must be a terrible disease," sighed Myra.

"It's probably a liver," said Bee thoughtfully. "Most all the cross ones have that."

"Did you ever see such a mess?" asked Helen, the president, looking disconsolately into the box of tumbled daisies and forget-me-nots. Helen was a remarkably pretty girl, with red cheeks, dimples, and a fluff of brown hair rolled back from her fresh round face.

"And look at these texts," said Alice, the secretary, fishing up a bunch which had fallen into the milk pan with the pansies. "They are just soaked." Alice was a pale, scholarly girl, who wore gold spectacles and always had her lessons.

"They are not fit for children, anyway," criticised Henrietta, the organist, as she peeped into the dripping bunch. "They are every one for

sailors or sinners." Henrietta was a dainty flower girl, with neat white collar and cuffs, and little blonde curls blowing about her delicately-cut face.

"Doesn't she equal Mrs. Slocum?" said Bee laughing. "Come, girls, we must hurry and do up the boxes. The expressman will be here any minute."

## CHAPTER XXI

### AN EVENING OF SHADOWS

ABOUT eight o'clock that evening, Dr. Ellen found the boxes of flowers all neatly tied and labeled, waiting on the stone block in front of the Cure. Beside them sat Bee wrapped in a somber hood and cloak, looking mournfully up the street.

"What is the matter?" asked Dr. Ellen, sitting down beside her. It was unusual to find Bee dolorous.

"Everything is so hard," and Bee dropped her head on Dr. Ellen's shoulder, "and everybody is so cross."

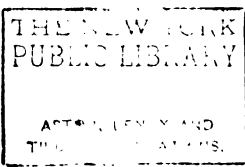
"Who has been cross to the flower children?"

"Mrs. Slocum told the housekeeper we trampled flowers into the carpet, and that made her cross—and the cook was cross because we carried off her pails—and Mrs. Slocum was worst of all—then the expressman went right past and never stopped for the boxes, after we told him three times—and we are so tired and discouraged.



**BEE DISHEARTENED IN HER WORK**

*p. 117*



Now the flowers will just wither and die—and you said the Lord would help us—and it isn't true." Here Bee's voice grew tremulous and broken. Her heart was very full.

"Did you ask for help?"

Bee made no reply further than to draw her mantle closer around her as they sat down on the block. The evening was chilly, and night was gathering around them.

Dr. Ellen drew the discouraged girl gently into her arms.

"Just as sure, Bee, as that thin new moon hangs in the sky, just as sure as the faithful stars shine down over our heads, the Lord is here with us, our *Present Help* in trouble. If our eyes were opened we could see thousands of chariots and angels coming down that white way where stars are as dust—and all do his bidding."

"Nobody can help us now. The train has gone an hour ago," returned Bee with a tired, fretful voice, as she drew her skepticism and her mantle more tightly around her.

"Let us speak to our Best Friend about it, dear child."

Everything was very still for a few moments, and the great elm near by waved its branches over them so softly that no one could hear a sound.

A sleepy bird stirred in its nest. As the mother



wing brooded over the nestlings, so the silence seemed to enfold them.

All at once there came down the village street the loud rattling of wheels, and a man's good-natured voice was heard saying:

"Sorry, Miss Kent, I forgot the boxes, but they can go just as well on this trip. The flowers don't go out any way till the ten o'clock train."

"Dr. Ellen," cried Bee, clasping her arms around the Thirteenth of First Corinthians, "it is true. When we say Our Father—he does hear."

## CHAPTER XXII

### HOW TO PACK FLOWERS

THE next day, Bee wrote to her friend Eloise :

MY DEAR ELOISE :

I am trying to start a flower mission, and I don't know any more about packing flowers than a last year's bird's nest. Please go to the best florist you know and ask him to show you just how it is done. If you will do this for me, I shall love you more than I do now, if that were possible.

Your affectionate

BEE.

A few days later, Bee received this letter from Eloise, which did her good like a June day, and proved to be of great service in her work.

MY AFFECTIONATE BEE :

We are truly grateful to you and Dr. Ellen for taking such good care of mamma. Dr. Ellen says you are a great big piece of sunshine wherever you are, and I believe it.

Papa seems to be losing his senses since mamma has been ill so much. He has sent for Miss Lavinia to come and live with us and be my companion, and teach me to *do* things. He wants me to learn to sweep and dust, and make beds, and mend, as his mother used to do. My fingers are all pricked up now, trying to make a pillow-case. Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous, when you can buy a pil-

low-case for thirty cents? It's good fun brushing around with a broom and flirting a duster gently, the way our maid does, but when Miss Lavinia comes into the room it's like a hurricane. All the furniture has to be moved and carried out, even to the mattress on the bed, and the springs, and my things get lost so I can't find them for days.

Papa says he wants to be kind to Miss Lavinia because she and Miss Patty were so good to him when he was a boy. His father was always hard on him, and he had to work when other boys had holidays, and were at play. Many a day when the mercury was nearly a hundred, and the stones in the field so hot they burned his bare feet, he would look up and see a pink sunbonnet and a bright tin pail coming along through the blackberry bushes by the Primrose lane, and he would take fresh courage, for he knew it was Miss Lavinia or Miss Patty bringing him a saucer pie, or cookies, with caraway seeds in them, baked fresh that morning, or the best lemonade that ever was made, flavored with berry juice.

Several times papa has sent for Miss Patty to go out with us on the yacht, and once he invited Mr. Laurie. Papa has been asking Miss Patty a great many questions about the young Scotchman, and the other evening when he told us he had secured for their friend a good paying position, Miss Lavinia and Miss Patty were both made happy. Mr. Laurie has always been as good as gold to them, and never misses a Sunday going to Miss Patty's mission, that no one else cares about.

Papa advised me who was the best florist here, and after I had sent him a little note I received an invitation to visit him. Miss Patty went with me, and we had the nicest time. The florist was very kind in showing us all through his conservatories, and they were beautiful. At last he took us into a house where the flowers were being packed, that we might see just how it was done—and here he advised us about the care of cut flowers. I have written it all down on a separate piece of paper.

I told papa about your flower mission, and he said he would like to be in Glenchase and help you pack the boxes. I believe papa loves every old grape vine and brier bush and sumac tree that ever grew around that little red school-house.

I wish you and Dr. Ellen, and cousin Evelyn could see our roses now. Most of the varieties are fine ones, and the bushes are loaded. One morning we picked two hundred, for no special purpose. Mamma does not wish them sent to her, but I might start a flower mission, if you will write me more about the work, and the difficulties, if there are any. You know I am not a hustler, like you, Bee.

Your loving friend,

ELOISE.

### THE FLORIST'S ADVICE

First of all, the cutting of flowers is just as particular as the packing of them. They should always be gathered in the early morning, or in the evening, never when their strength is taken by the hot rays of the sun. After cutting, they should at once be put into cold water, almost the entire length of their stems, but the blossoms kept perfectly dry. Leave them several hours, or over night, in a cool place, and then they will be ready for packing.

Should the blossoms be found wet from dew or rain, they must be shaken and put in a place to dry, and never placed in a box with the least dampness on the flowers. Soft dry paper should be put into the bottom of the box; this covered with a layer of wax paper, and the sides lined with the same. Sprinkle this lining with water, and then begin to lay the flowers in, one by one; and between the rows of blossoms across the width of the box, put a soft roll of dry waxed paper. For the first row make a little pillow of this waxed paper. When the box is filled, if there are any little spaces, they should be filled with rolls of this dry paper, so they will not move about in the box.

After the flowers are all in the box, the sheets of waxed paper hanging over the ends and sides of the box are turned over the flowers, and the outside sprinkled a little before putting on the cover. You will see by these directions that the water must not touch the blossoms in any way.

In sending roses, it is a good plan to wrap each bud or flower in the dry waxed paper, and not to be afraid of hurting the rose, but sort of twist the paper around it, which would keep it from opening on the way.

If waxed paper is hard to get, newspaper or brown tissue could be used instead, only the newspaper requires twice as much moisture as the waxed paper. These directions are for common garden flowers as well as for those from the conservatories.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

A LITTLE time after receiving the letter from Eloise, Bee replied :

MY DEAR GIRL :

It seems too bad you should suffer such miseries all because Miss Lavinia and Miss Patty were kind to your father in his early youth. You are just like a girl in a story book, and that must be a comfort to you when your fingers get pricked and hurricanes come along. I read your letter to Miss Evelyn, because she was here when it came, and she just laid her head down on Dr. Ellen's shoulder and wept and sobbed. They are always weeping on Dr. Ellen's bosom, and that is the reason why she can never have a dress that won't stand salt water.

Dr. Ellen told me not to read the letter to your mother, because sometimes the more people don't know the happier they will feel,

It was so good of you to write to me just how the best florists pack flowers, and his advice will be a great help to me and my flower children.

I wish you could see them when they come with flowers. Last week, Marguerite, one of the littlest ones, came with her hands behind her, and surprised us with a branch of blossoms from her own peach tree. It meant a great deal from Marguerite, for it was all she had to give.

This week, Myra and Alice had their arms filled with

snowballs and purple and white lilacs, and my faithful wintergreen girl, Grace Mary, brought a basket of pink and white trilliums which are so plenty in the woods just now. Some call them wake-robins, but I don't know whether they wake the robins, or the robins wake them up.

Henrietta came next, with her braids all tied in ribbons, like a May-pole, Her mother had just been setting plants out in the garden, so she sent us a basket full of cuttings and a lot of the rose geraniums, that makes our boxes so sweet. Then came Onalee laughing and dancing down the street with her hands full of clover. Her face was as pink as the blossoms when she put the flowers down shyly, saying :

"Mamma thought I could bring clover, so the city children might see what the cows did eat."

Helen sent her brothers up with a quantity of mint and ferns that grow by the brook, and when this green was packed in with the flowers, they looked so beautiful I was just delighted with them.

At last I put in the message we always send :

#### THESE ARE LOVING FLOWERS.

You ask about difficulties in our flower mission work—like the hill in Pilgrim's Progress, all the going-up side is difficult, but that only makes it interesting. The first difficulty is to get the flowers.

Some of our girls go from door to door with baskets, asking for flowers and telling about the little children down there in New York who stand at Pastor Joyce's gate waiting so patiently for the blossoms. The children down there love flowers, and when the supply we send in is all gone, they beg even for the broken leaves and stems, they are so hungry for them—and this is true, Eloise.

We went first to Grandma Amesbry and told her the story as she took us out in her garden and picked more old-fashioned flowers than you ever heard of. While she was tying up sweet-williams and lavender and infants' breath, she said :

"I want to send some flowers to those little shavers, an' if

you ask our next neighbor, Mis' Towne, like as not she'll give some."

So it goes from one to another until we have all the flowers we can pick. It's more fun than Swiss Family Robinson, exploring all the village gardens and finding out sweet nooks and corners we didn't know about before. But one day, after picking two or three thousand flowers, Myra and I were so tuckered out we were obliged to think up some other plan, and it was this. Every week we print a few lines about our work in the village paper, along with some of the letters we receive from Pastor Joyce and his children. People with gardens far out in the country read these letters and find out about our work, and on flower mission days, when we set out pans and pails, and pitchers of water, they are filled full of flowers. Everybody is so good to us.

The most interesting difficulties of all are the flower children themselves. They have no idea of doing the work regularly and on time. Sometimes they bring more flowers than we can pack. Sometimes they come late, after the boxes are all ready for the expressman, and sometimes they forget to come at all. At first this discouraged Myra and me dreadfully, but we have found out if we always get the boxes ready and the pails of water ready, the flowers always come from somewhere. Dr. Ellen says this is because the Lord is working with us, and some days, Eloise, if I were to see a shining angel come and fill the pails and pitchers, I couldn't be any more surprised than I am now. One week, when flowers were scarce and I didn't know where to look for any, I met an old lady and gentleman with a carriage full of blossoms, driving up and down the street inquiring for the flower mission. They had read about it in the village paper—but wasn't I glad to see them, and they seemed real pleased to find me.

I have written to you how Henry Primrose teases his little sister, and what a torment he is to Aunt Carlotta. The other day she sent him to the village right away after dinner for a pail of vinegar, and told him to hurry back. Henry



never got back till dusk, and then the vinegar was molasses. Well, yesterday Henry walked clear to Silver Stream and back to bring me a bunch of flowers, and when I asked him if Aunt Carlotta had sent them, he said :

"No, I picked them myself."

Wasn't that good of a careless boy like Henry to remember ?

Sorting the flowers is slow work, and it takes the patience of an angel like Miss Evelyn to bunch them, and stand them up properly in cold water, so the stems will fill up and the blossoms keep dry. The fascinating part of the work is selecting the brightest and freshest, and putting together the colors that blend prettily. When we lay their heads on the cunning wax pillows and fold wax paper over them, they do look sweet enough to eat.

Of course it is a bother to take so much pains when you are in a hurry, and it is ever so much easier to throw them in somehow with a lot of wet paper and cotton, and crush the lid down and tie the box up quick. The last time we did a box that way, Pastor Joyce carried it to a sick child, who spent two hours untangling daisies from forget-me-nots !

We will never do it any more.

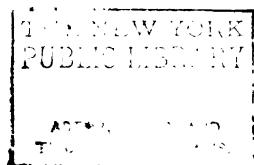
Packing the flowers makes a good deal of slop and muss, and that is one reason why the girls' mothers don't want us around. Dr. Ellen said we could use the gymnasium, but the last time we met there it had rained little dogs and cats, and some of the children forgot to take off their rubbers, so they tracked mud all over the stairs and floor, and the housekeeper was "madder'n hops." Then we sang some of our L. T. L. marching songs, and yelled a few times—the gymnasium is such a glorious place to yell—but so many of the Cure ladies collapsed that we are forbidden to go into the house any more. Now we pack our flower boxes under a hawthorn tree on the lawn, but what we will do when it rains, nobody knows.

There is still one more difficulty, and that is getting our boxes ready for the expressman. If the flowers come late,



“ I PICKED 'EM MYSELF ”

*p. 126*



the expressman is sure to come early, and of course he cannot wait a minute, because he is always going to meet a train. Our expressman is a good man, with such a poor memory. He usually forgets us about every other time. You should see Myra and Alice, and Henrietta go scurrying after him, while I pray with all my might, It is agonizing to see the pile of boxes, with their nice tags pasted on and no expressman in sight, and to know, if they don't reach the train on time, the flowers will perish, and I begin to worry till my faith slips clear away. But I keep on praying too, and just as soon as the expressman comes in sight, my faith comes back bounding. Then we begin to load the boxes into the express wagon, and that is the best fun of all. All the children help at once, and the jolly expressman seems to enjoy the fun just as much as we do.

In New York there is difficulty again when the expressman forgets to deliver our boxes. Once the flowers were not delivered for two or three days, and then they were dry and withered. Now we have printed tags pasted on all the boxes like this :

**CUT FLOWERS ; KINDLY DELIVER AT ONCE.**

Our courage would never hold out for the work if it were not for the letters that keep coming back, telling us how glad the flowers have made lonesome people, and sick people, and how little children have pressed them to their lips and loved them.

Pastor Joyce writes : " When the flowers come from the fields we always get close to God."

Dear Eloise, if you knew the gladness of receiving words like these, you wouldn't pick roses without a purpose any more.

Your true friend,

**KATHERINE BARBARA KENT.**

## CHAPTER XXIV

### UNDER THE HAWTHORN TREE

It was early in June, and Bee having spread a sheet under the pink hawthorn tree, Miss Evelyn appeared bright and early to help with the baskets of roses, for baskets of little Scotch roses were beginning to come in, whose large stems were covered with needle-like pricklers that had to be removed. As Bee and Miss Evelyn worked at these rough stems, they talked of the little hands that would be stretched out for them, and how cruel it would seem to those trusting little hearts if thorns were sent with the blossoms.

“Did you know, honey, that I had been a flower missionary?” Miss Evelyn’s speech, slow and deliciously sweet, was that of a southern woman, and her every accent had the tenderness of a caress.

“How should I know?” replied Bee, looking up at Miss Evelyn, and thinking that this aristocratic young woman in her frilled white sun-bonnet, and pink dimity, was a vision of loveliness.

"I worked as clerk for our probate clerk in Corydon."

"You worked as clerk?" exclaimed Bee, in surprise.

"Yes, in the probate court. That is where I did flower mission work, in that dingy old courthouse down in Alabama."

"I believe it's a story! Oh, please tell me about it, Miss Evelyn."

"It isn't thrilling enough to be interesting, honey."

"I like to hear the sound of your voice, anyway, Miss Evelyn. Please go on," and with bees humming about in the near-by flower beds and the roses in her lap pouring forth their fragrant breath, Bee listened with all her heart to Miss Evelyn's flower mission story.

"Corydon is the county seat and the courthouse is there," began Miss Evelyn, gently breaking the thorns from a branch of pale, pink roses, "but I reckon it would seem like a quiet place to you, for we are miles from a railroad and the stage brings the mail.

"We have a great house and gardens and my father is a merchant there, so we are counted rich people in the village. The truth is, honey, we are poor, for there are my sisters to be educated and kinfolk in distress to be helped, and other folks' debts to shoulder, and heaps of com-

pany all the time, so when business is dull it is hard to make both ends meet. The poorest people in the world are the rich people who haven't money enough to meet all the demands made upon them.

"After my mother died, I had to take her place in the family and help my father bear his burdens. I knew what our expenses were and that my father could not meet them, so after thinking it all over, I put on my sunbonnet one morning and went down to the court-house and asked to see the judge. I told him I heard he was looking for a clerk and I was looking for a place. I was just a girl, and my voice trembled, and my sunbonnet did not hide my face like I wished it could.

"The judge looked down upon me awhile in silence and then said as savage as a bear :

" ' We never employ a woman. It is a man's work. ' "

"This wasn't much encouragement, but I took off my sunbonnet and hung it up and asked him if he would let me try a man's work for a few days.

"The judge looked at me in a sort of helpless surprise, and then he looked out the window.

"Well, honey, my father had a considerable influence, and my mother was second cousin of the judge, and besides, the judge had a heap of

work to do, and not a man in sight to do it, so he agreed after awhile, ungraciously enough, to let me try.

"I reckon you never saw so filthy a place in all your life as the judge's rooms in that courthouse. Even the judge admitted there wasn't a place where a man could lay down his hat or put his handkerchief. The judge is an old bachelor who lives in the one forlorn hotel in the village, and it is a homeless place.

"When I suggested that the rooms we worked in should be cleaned, the judge looked like he was surprised, and said he couldn't find anybody to clean them. I told him I could. Then I went out and brought in two black mam-mies and I pinned up my skirts and sleeves and helped them myself. Such a cleaning those rooms had as they had never before, and the floors were actually white when we finished scouring them.

"Before my time, there had been such an accumulation of old papers and old blotters that the tables were out of sight. Now every morning I straightened up things and destroyed the old papers and blotters that were of no use, and put the tables in order and kept the books written up neatly. Then I ventured to bring flowers. Our yard and garden were just overrunning with honeysuckles, jessamine, and all kinds of sweet



scented flowering shrubs, and rows and rows of tall, white lilies glistening in the sun. I love flowers and I just couldn't help taking them—not a few, but a heap of them to make a blaze of brightness in those dingy old rooms.

"The judge looked at the flowers like he despised them, but every day I kept putting fresh ones on his desk and mine. He was so edge-ways about the flowers that I was bound to do my work twice as well, so he could find no fault. You don't know, honey, how hard I worked every day trying to be faithful, for fear I should lose my place. And I kept on taking the flowers and packing them in lace moss, so they would keep fresh.

"One day I asked the judge if he didn't notice the flowers looked pretty, but he only glared at me and said :

" 'They don't buy bread and meat.' He thought I ought to be doing something else that would count. I had a good cry when I went home that day, but I kept on carrying the flowers.

"One day there were to be two political speeches in the court-house, and I asked the judge if he would carry up a splendid bunch of white lilacs to the speaker he favored, but the judge only looked frosty enough to wither all the flowers out of doors, and said :

“ ‘ Please excuse me.’

“ Just then a friend came along, who heard what the judge said, and he took the flowers out of my hands and said he would carry them to the other speaker. The other speaker did not have many friends there, but when he saw the flowers, he said they gave him courage, and he won the day with such a victory as to put the judge’s man clear out of sight.

“ After about two weeks, I was late one Monday morning, and came in without my basket of flowers. I took off my sunbonnet and went to work as usual, but, honey, the judge kept looking around as if he couldn’t find something, and seemed so abused that I asked what it was, and he said right out :

“ ‘ Where are the flowers?’

“ I could have jumped up and down for joy, but I said nothing. I “ got inside of my soul,” as black mammy used to say, and stayed there.

“ After that I put flowers in the windows, and in some of the other rooms, and a man going past one day came in, and he said to the judge :

“ ‘ Judge, I hear if you keep flowers in the window, the devil will go out the door.’

“ The judge looked queer, and after wiping his spectacles very carefully, he said :

“ ‘ The devil doesn’t seem so numerous around here as he has been in my remembrance.’

"And, for a fact, the men never smoked in the rooms any more, and when the judge felt obliged to smoke he would go and sit on the outside steps, but no one else was allowed to smoke on the premises. As for swearing, it was never heard in my presence. I was surprised one morning when I was making our office sweet with flowers to have the judge say in a mild tone :

" ' Please, Miss Evelyn,' instead of ' Hand me that,' as cross as a bear, like he was used to doing.

" He saw the look of surprise in my face, for he chuckled softly, and, after a little, he said he was going to change his manner of speaking, and that he would try to say, ' Please, Miss Evelyn,' all the time.

" ' Now where will you get flowers from ? ' the judge asked, when winter came.

" ' Wait and see,' I told him. I knew I could at least have holly, but I had something better than that. I used often, in walking to my work, go out of my way to visit a little cottage where a rough woman lived, a regular " hillite," who cared for flowers just as much as I did. She would be out cutting wood, or digging in her garden, or watering her plants, and I would stop and ask her about them, for I knew she loved her flowers as if they were children. Sometimes I carried her seeds and bulbs, and sometimes she

would give me slips, so we became great chums. At Christmas time, when the ground was sprinkled over with snow, a queer box was sent to me at the court-house, and, to my surprise, on opening it I found it filled with brilliant geranium blossoms, packed with leaves and ferns. I filled a glass bowl with the handsomest ones for the judge's desk, and, honey, he was mightily pleased, and so was I.

"Some of these bright geraniums I carried to church; and a few weeks later, when my dear old flower woman sent me yellow jonquils, I carried them to church because I found it encouraged the minister. Everybody laughed at me for carrying these common yellow flowers, but I didn't mind. I knew there were young people in the village who worshiped flowers, and the brightness and sweetness of them would draw them to church like music, so I dressed my vases for church before I dressed myself, and on snowy or sleety days I took particular pains to have the finest flowers. The rough old hillite was so pleased when she heard that her flowers went to church, and that people asked where they came from, that she fell to cultivating them with more zeal than ever. She felt now she had some purpose in view, and after awhile, honey, she went to church to see the flowers. She was bound to go.

"As to the court-house, after I carried flowers

there for a year, it was so clean and orderly, that it seemed like it was made over, and even the men seemed to be converted to better ways, for swearing, smoking and drinking were never allowed in the presence of myself or my flowers.

"There were a number of other offices in the court-house, and after awhile I managed to slip flowers into the rooms of the surrogate and supervisor and sheriff. Then they began to look around and brush up their rooms and bring flowers themselves, and next they started a reading circle and made me an honorary member. After that they fitted up a reading-room real handsome and at last they painted the court-house. Now it looks like another place.

"One day a young man came in from an office across the hall and said :

" 'Miss Evelyn, I beg your pardon for the language those men have been using in our room. I have put them out and it shall never occur again.'

"I had often seen the young man at our church. He was recently from Edinburgh and our minister, a Scotchman himself, had introduced him to me. Afterwards one morning when I was arranging the flowers he came in, and in a laughing way said :

" 'Miss Evelyn, I am coming every day for a rose.'

"But you can't have any of my roses unless you quit smoking," I replied soberly, for I had been grieved to see him smoking on the street.

"'Miss Evelyn,' he said earnestly. 'I promise you I will give it up.'

"Every day the young man came for the rose, and every day I gave him some word to strengthen and encourage him in keeping his promise. In time we became friends and I cannot tell you how gentle and sweet in heart I found him to be, or how much his friendship meant to me. He was called suddenly away and in deep trouble wrote to me, expecting the word of sympathy would come as it always had with the roses. I felt hurt to hear that he was in trouble, and irritated that I could not help him. I was nearly wild with the pain of it when I wrote him a harsh note blaming him. He seemed so a part of myself that I thought nothing of giving him pain. I was so young and inexperienced I did not realize how easily a brave, tender heart may be hurt, and he had always been so patient and sweet it never occurred to me that he could stop loving me. He never answered my letter—that was all."

Miss Evelyn laid the long stems of roses tenderly in their resting-place, and as she smoothed the wax-paper over them Bee saw that her tears were falling like rain.

"I was away from the office seriously ill after

that," continued Miss Evelyn, when she could steady her voice. "One day when I was able to sit up a little the judge came to see me. It may be I looked white and ghostlike for the tears filled his eyes, and then that noble-hearted man told me how they had missed me and how they missed the flowers and how the probate court couldn't go on no way without them. The devil would get in sure. Even the poor old colored janitor was lost without those flowers.

" 'But, Miss Evelyn,' he said humbly, 'that dish of lace moss is still green on my table. I have given it water every day.'

"That made me feel so bad I got up the next day and went back to the office with an armful of blazing chrysanthemums, but I reckon I wasn't able to go. I broke down. About that time my aunt, Mrs. Slocum, came visiting us and she sent me up here."

"Is Mrs. Slocum your own aunt?"

"Yes," returned Miss Evelyn, paling and flushing, "It is through her generous kindness that I am here getting well."

Bee began whistling under her breath, an accomplishment she had learned of brother Will and one she still fell back upon when words could not express her emotion. How could Mrs. Slocum be related to so lovable a creature as Miss Evelyn?

*UNDER THE HAWTHORN TREE* 139

"Let us pack some of these hawthorn blossoms," Bee said presently. "They are hanging down just ready to tumble into a box."

"My heart is where the heather blooms  
Where the hawthorn scents the air,"

Miss Evelyn repeated softly, as the two broke the long branches of pink hawthorn and laid them carefully in a box.

"My heart is where my true love roams,"

prompted Bee.

"That was one of Mr. Laurie's songs, Miss Evelyn." You would like our Mr. Laurie. He is a divinity student from Edinburgh and Dr. Ellen has a letter from him every once in a while. She thinks he's a dear and so do I. Wouldn't it be nice to send him this box of hawthorn?

"I have heard him tell that in Scotland the hawthorn looks like wreaths all around the fields in June. Miss Patty says the poor boy is so homesick for Scotland some days, he would give a crown to see a pink daisy. Let's fill up the corners with bunches of daisies, just to remind him of 'Banks and braes of bonny Doon.' The flower children will bring a lot in their baskets—here they are now—Oh, Miss Evelyn!"

But when Bee turned Miss Evelyn had vanished.



## CHAPTER XXV

### SOME EXPERIMENTS THAT FAILED

"BLUE flags! Blue flags! Mrs. Slocum!" cried Bee, bringing them in triumphantly. "The first we've found this year—they grow down by the brook in the meadow, and we're going for flag-root another day. Mother Margaret makes the best candy out of flag-root,"

"Don't bring them near me!" commanded Mrs. Slocum, waving Bee away, imperiously. "Those kinds of flowers are sure to have beetles or some odious insects in them."

"I don't think so," returned Bee joyously, as she arranged the blue flowers in a tall vase. "Brother Will has told me a lot about beetles, and some of them with gold and green spots are just handsome."

Mrs. Slocum groaned.

"And crows," Bee went on heedlessly. "Brother Will and I just love to sit on a log and watch crows. They are so jolly and friendly with their caw, caw. Brother Will says they have a language and somebody has written a crow's

dictionary. Don't you like crows, Mrs. Slocum?"

"I know nothing about them," returned that lady, with icy accents.

"Isn't that a pity? You're sure to be interested in trees, though. Brother Will has told me more stories about trees. I can tell a white oak from a black oak, and pretty near guess at a scarlet oak. It's awfully interesting when you begin to know about them. Will says they have their pockets full of secrets and it's such fun finding them out." And here Bee darted out and brought in a great bunch of red columbine. Her face, rosily flushed with the wind, seemed to beam all over with sunshine as she held up the spray. "Isn't this red columbine a picture? Don't you love wild flowers, Mrs. Slocum?"

"No," returned that lady, with undisguised vexation. "I hope I may never hear of another wild flower while I live."

Bee dropped the stem of the red columbine as if it were an inverted torch, and turned and went out of the room wondering what she could try next.

In her perplexity Bee ran against Dr. Ellen and persuaded her to stop for a moment with her in the shaded summer-house on the edge of the garden, where, once alone with her friend, Bee produced the following letter from Eloise:

MY DEAR GIRL :

Tell Dr. Ellen please to hurry up and make mamma well, for things here are all getting so stirred up I don't know what is going to happen next. I feel sure that papa is out of his mind, for he talks to me so much about being *useful*, as if I were going out to service. After I learned to make a bed to suit Miss Lavinia ! ! ! ! ! ! those points stand for hard struggles, and when I had hemmed and whipped and overcasted my life away on a pillow case, then papa sent for Miss Patty to come and teach me how to make caraway seed cookies and saucer pies just like those in the tin pail. Miss Lavinia made me wear an ugly, long-sleeved gingham apron and that was a great trial, but I worked hard to please Miss Patty, and tried and tried until the flour was just salted with my tears, Papa said the saucer pies and caraway cookies were all right, and he said he would give a thousand dollars if I could make a good loaf of bread, which is so foolish, when the cook makes Vienna bread perfect,

I love Miss Patty, and the cook is nice to help us, but eight lady housekeepers have given notice to leave since Miss Lavinia came to live with us, and now the maids are going, Papa says when they are all gone we will just close the house and cruise around on the yacht until mamma gets back. This is why I can't start any flower mission.

Your unhappy ELOISE.

"Poor Eloise," said Dr. Ellen, thoughtfully, "it is she who is lacking in sense if she does not realize that it is noble and high to be useful."

"Eloise is just as good and sweet as she can be," cried Bee, loyal to her friend.

"Eloise is just as good as she is pretty, but it isn't enough to be good and pretty."

"It isn't!" exclaimed Bee.

"No, dear child, every girl should try to be of

use to somebody, just as you are going to be helpful to Mother Margaret when you go back to live with her. Every day your willing feet must run to serve her."

Bee hung her head, remembering how, in times past, her feet had been wont to run away from the small household tasks allotted to her.

"You are helping us all now with your flowers, Bee," Dr. Ellen added kindly, for the little girl sitting there with her arms full of rejected flags and columbines, was a picture of discouragement.

"Mrs. Slocum doesn't think so," said Bee dejectedly. "She made me carry them right out, and I thought they would make her feel well and peaceful. If Miss Evelyn could make over a court-house, and a reprobate judge, and supervisor, and surrogate, with flowers, I don't see why I couldn't make over Mrs. Slocum. Perhaps it's because I've brought only wild flowers."

"Never mind, we will send these flowers to John Slocum, and they will remind him of the nicest stories to tell Eloise, and that will cheer her up. And don't give up Mrs. Slocum!"

"I will keep on trying."

When Bee did anything, she did it so vigorously and energetically that sometimes she went away beyond the mark.

"I am literally a martyr to the whims of that Bee Kent," Mrs. Slocum complained bitterly to

her friends, Mrs. Basil and Miss Mildmay. She fairly smothers me with flowers. This morning she had a bowl of carnations on the table at my bedside. I had her take them directly out of the room. I never could endure the odor of carnations."

"Why don't you speak to her about it?" asked Mrs. Basil, a very stout lady who had come to the Cure to be reduced.

"Speak to her! I have spoken to her till I am black and blue," and Mrs. Slocum took out her smelling salts.

"I would complain to the physicians," advised Miss Mildmay, arranging the pillows more comfortably in Mrs. Slocum's easy-chair. "It is the meek and lamblike, Mrs. Slocum, who are always being imposed upon." Miss Mildmay was a tall and very thin young woman, who had come to the Cure to be fattened up.

"It is an imposition," shuddered Mrs. Slocum, "to be awakened an hour before breakfast and have a glass of cold water poured down your throat, and then have a breakfast tray sent up decked out with flowers, and not a drop of coffee."

"This is a world of suffering, Mrs. Slocum," said Mrs. Basil, her rich bumblebee voice softened with feeling. "However, we will have one good strong cup of coffee to-night," and she pro-

ceeded to spread a white cloth over the center-table.

"And I have provided a trifle or two," said Mrs. Slocum, brightening up. "Did you receive the basket, Mrs. Basil?"

"Yes, here it is."

"And I have something in the way of a confection," Miss Mildmay confided to the company, producing from a pasteboard box a choice fruit cake with sugar-plums stuck around in the frosting, which she had ordered for this occasion.

"This really seems like a taste of home," said Mrs. Basil, beaming upon the company as she passed the fragrant cups of coffee, and replaced the coffee-pot upon the cunning alcohol lamp.

"Oh, horrors!" cried Mrs. Slocum, as a knock came at the door.

"It is Dr. McGregor's rap," whispered Miss Mildmay, rising with a tragic gesture as the well-known tap with the tips of the fingers was heard again. "We are undone."

"Well, an' how iss you an' Missis Slocum gettin' along dese days?" Katey, the kind, good nurse, asked Bee that night as she gave her a rub before leaving her for the night.

"Oh, she's worse every day, Katey. I am so disappointed. I had a scheme for softening her up with flowers. You know Miss Evelyn had wonderful luck making a whole court-house over

with flowers, but not a posy can I find that will make so much as a dent on Mrs. Slocum. They seem to wither right down the minute she looks at them. What is the matter with Mrs. Slocum, Katey?"

"Missis Slocum wass always used to havin' her own way. Dat iss what makes her so hard. Wen you go thro' de fire of afflictions, Dr. Ellen wass sayin', you are like a fine temper steel, an' you give up, an' you are as soft like silk. Missis Slocum never wass in de furnace, and so she is hard yet."

"She certainly is hard, harder than a court-house," mused Bee.

"Well, you know to-day Missis Slocum was feelin' so bad, we could hardly keep de breath o' life in her body, an' dis evenin' she dress up in her welvet dress, an' lace, an' diamon's, an' go into Missis Basil's room. Miss Mildmay, she was in dere, an' dey wass a wisitin' togedder wen Dr. Ellen go to de door an' knock. An' she hear a rustlin' and stirrin' round, an' a rattlin' o' de stove door, but she wait till it wass all quiet, an' she say nothin'. Wen she went in, Missis Slocum, she say her indigestion was awful, an' Miss Mildmay, she say her head ache ready to split, and Missis Basil say she ain't been' reduced as she ought to be, an' no one knows her sufferin'.

“ ‘ It feels a little chilly here, doesn’t it,’ said Dr. Ellen, “an’ den she take a match an’ light a fire in de stove, and sit down an’ talk an’ laugh. She know they jess put a big frosted cake inside. It was too bad to burn dat cake up.

“ De coffee an’ olives an’ sardines, an’ two boxes o’ chocolates was set outside de window, an’ I was dere to take care o’ dem. I am werry fond o’ coffey, an’ chocolates nefer hurt my ’digestion.” And Katey chuckled softly. “I don’t tink dey ate anythin’ but sandwiches, an’ dat won’t hurt ’em.”



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FLOWER MISSION LETTERS.

AT an hour when the children were going past to school, Bee, who had been loitering out of doors to catch sight of them, put her hands to her mouth and gave a shrill trumpet-like call. Other calls came back with equal shrillness and then young voices were heard singing up and down the street. It was the L.T.L. battle hymn, and Bee, forgetting the forty invalid ladies taking their rest hour on the Cure verandas, joined in with all her heart :

“ What is this they singing bear  
Thro' the dewy morning air,  
Shining like a cross of gold  
As it leads the children on  
Thro' the morning ? ”

“ Oh that holy sign unfurled  
Means redemption for the world,  
And borne on from hand to hand  
For our God, our Home, our Land  
They will plant it on the uplands  
In the morning.”

Rosamond, one of the nurses, in immaculate white cap and apron, appeared quickly :

"Mrs. Slocum is trying to rest," she said, with warning in her uplifted finger. "The noise disturbs her."

Bee's voice is silenced at once, but she continues to look wistfully after the children as they troop past. Henry Primrose is hurrying by with great strides as if the hill of knowledge were to be climbed that forenoon; he is thinking of his examination in geometry; Myra is not far behind, her starched skirts rustling and her dark smooth braids tied with stiff little ribbons in mathematical precision. Beside her walks modest little Anne Primrose, a large bunch of sweet-swelling posies for her teacher in one hand, and a shining dinner pail in the other.

"She's sure to have one of Aunt Carlotta's best saucer pies in her dinner pail," meditated Bee. "I wonder what kind it is to-day."

Next Henrietta comes fluttering past in a frilled pink muslin like a rose in bloom, and with her is Helen, who has been hurrying to catch up until her cheeks are aflame like tulips; the next is bird's-nest Jack, looking out of the tail of his eye for a chippy bird's nest that might chance to be in the syringa bush; and following Jack is Billy Downs, stopping for leap-frog at every post along the way; and passing Billy is Alice, tall and slender and dressed in white like a lily. All the children have a friendly nod or wave of the hand for

Bee as they pass by, but Alice is turning aside and coming towards her—what can it be—oh joy!—it is more flower mission letters!

Bee opened the letters and read them eagerly, marking paragraphs that would be good to print in the village paper to help on their work. The first letter opened was from Mary Hoffner, and these words she felt would touch a heart of stone:

The flowers came fresh, fragrant, dewy, and I carried my bunch to my work and divided them around with the other girls in our basement. How good you all are to remember us working girls with this heavenly breath of the fields and woods.

The next letter was from one of Pastor Joyce's children, Emma, whom Bee remembered, a friendly little girl in a red dress who came and shook hands with her that night in the chapel, and brought up several other little friends to be introduced. Bee could still see her smiling face and sprightly little figure as she read the letter:

MY DEAR MISS KENT:

I am one of the children who receive the flowers every past Saturday and I wish you could see the happy faces and eager eyes in our sewing school when the flowers come.

Whatever is left from the flowers, I take to the sick at Gouverneur Hospital. How I got acquainted with the Hospital was, my little brother Otto was in last winter with a broken leg. I went to see him mostly every day. He was in for eight weeks and that time I saw what pain was, and made up my mind to do whatever I can to comfort the sick.

When I went last Saturday there was a little girl two years old with a broken leg and crying for pain, The flowers I gave her stopped her tears and she forgot her pain and was happy. I told them that friends of the children sent the beautiful flowers every week.

We give our thanks to the children and older ones who go such a far distance to pick the flowers. It shows the love and compassion for other children. I am twelve years old and my brother is ten. I pray to the Lord to guard you and give you strength in your Christian work and reward you for your kindness. May his blessing be with you always. With a heart full of love and thanksgiving, I am

Your little friend,

EMMA M——.

The next letter was from Minna, and Bee lingered over it a long while, appreciating as she had not done before that this girl's nature was as pure and lovely as the white rose she wore the evening she and Marguerite led them through dark and foul streets into the light of the prayer-meeting room :

MY DEAR MISS KENT :

Many thanks for the sweet flowers you send us giving us such loving thoughts and messages. They make any one feel good for days, and many a sick person too has been cheered with them. My uncle has received some. He was so sick and when I would take them into the room, it was good to see the smile on his face.

I am so often asked about you and the children who send the flowers, and we are all of us grateful to you for remembering our children. I can myself see so much love in the lives of these children here and they often come in such simple, trustful faith to me when in doubt whether God would do

## 152 *BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN*

certain things for them. I think Pastor has such a strong hold of them all, and I know there isn't one child who doesn't love him.

God has been good enough to give me a burden, a heavy one too. My class in Sunday School consists of girls who as yet do not know the Saviour. I am praying that I may be able to lead them into the Light of lights, and then by my life to keep them in communion with God, that their light may shine and others be led to find the preciousness of his love.

Remember me with love to Dr. McGregor, not forgetting to keep a share for yourself.

Your loving sister in Christ,  
MINNA.

The last letter was from Pastor Joyce himself and Bee read it through twice without stopping :

**" ALL THINGS ARE YOURS ; AND YE ARE  
CHRIST'S, AND CHRIST IS GOD'S."**

**MY DEAR AND BELOVED FLOWER CHILDREN :**

The Lord lead you into the enjoyment and blessedness of your possessions this beautiful day. Sabbath everything was full of beauty. How the predestined flowers did their part in this beauty I do not know, though I do know God used them all.

Yesterday night a young man came to my gate with his pansy dried into his buttonhole. I told Fred the flower was faithful to him and he said, "I do not like to give it up." Faded, the beauty is there still and the thought with the flower makes it all the more beautiful.

Now you must have another view and know how these flowers refresh us down here in the flaming heat of the city, for the whole city is like an oven these days and the sun beats upon it successfully until we roast. When the flowers come, I send for my helpers and we seat ourselves Turk

## *FLOWER MISSION LETTERS* 153

fashion on the latticed porch outside the study door. Here the boxes are opened, the flowers fresh and fragrant lifted out and made over into tiny bunches that they may go as far as possible. The pansies we wrap in cotton and put in water to keep them fresh for Sunday. So these baskets of flowers give us picnics after my own heart down here in the heat and stoniness of the city, and it is something like heaven to be in a flower garden such as we were in last Saturday morning. May your own heaven be richer for knowing of our joy and comfort and delight.

I thank you all a thousand times for the help you are giving me.

Very affectionately yours in the fellowship of his wonderful heart.

THOMAS JOYCE.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### TRYING TO BE GOOD.

WHEN BEE had finished reading these letters, she looked over the village gardens up and down the street smiling in the sunshine. All had a lively interest for Bee now because of their rich possibilities in flowers, and flowers had at this moment taken on fresh value in the girl's mind since she saw how they could ease pain, comfort the lonely, and bring joy and gladness out of the earth into the hearts of little children. In their mantles of green and gold, and white and scarlet, these flowers were indeed messengers of the King himself, to carry his words of love.

As these thoughts came swelling into her heart, Bee held a little conversation with herself, and it was like this :

“ Katherine Barbara Kent, if you are going to work with the flowers and with God—yes, work with God—you must be good and obedient like the flowers and the moss and the clover-leaf. Try it, Katherine Barbara, just for one day, and

do everything anybody asks you to do, and mind everything Dr. Ellen tells you to do."

"Now, Katherine Barbara," the colloquy continued, "you know you want to run away to Mother Margaret's this minute, and eat a thick slice of her bread and butter and a bowlful of strawberries and cream—thick cream—oh, deary me—and it would be such fun to help Miss Evelyn pick honeysuckles and roses in Aunt Carlotta's garden, she's so afraid of that corner where the beehives stand, and you don't mind them a bit; and you want awfully to run away with Myra to the farthest corner of trillium woods and hunt for another bunch of those pink orchids—Mrs. Slocum likes orchids—she says they make her think of the florists' windows on Fifth Avenue. Maybe Mrs. Slocum could be sweetened up with orchids, and it wouldn't hurt me one bit to go."

As Bee hesitated, a fresh refrain came floating back from the children going over the hill-top :

" We are all little soldiers in the battle,  
All little soldiers brave and true."

"Katherine Barbara," very sternly and resolutely, "look at that clover-leaf, every notch and clover-leaf mark says *obedience*. If a little senseless thing like that can work out a plan—can you try—and be good and obedient for one day?"



That night, about nine o'clock, Mother Margaret was perplexed to find a note under her door addressed to herself. The handwriting in lead pencil, was like Bee's, but it had the appearance of having been written in a storm at sea, and two or three spots on it suggested tears :

MY DEAREST ONLY MOTHER MARGARET:

Dr. Ellen said I must not come home. I don't know why. I think it's to punish me for disobedience because I forget to do things most every day. But, dear Mother Margaret, I do love you, and I do want to see you. Maybe I can look in the window when I bring this note. It's so queer these days. Dr. Ellen's away so much, and when she comes back she never has any time to talk to any one, and Miss Evelyn doesn't come to the flower mission any more.

Mr. Slocum sent us a great roll of something so shining and white I thought at first it was a silk dress, but it wasn't. It was the finest wax paper for the flower girls, and enough to last a year. Mrs. Slocum has been the worst to-day she's ever been. She's been awful, but I won't tell you what she's been like, because it would make you sad, but she's been perfectly awful.

When Mrs. Slocum had her worst spell she wanted to send for Dr. Ellen to come right back, but the gardener had gone to drive for Dr. Ellen, and the watchman wasn't here, and there wasn't a boy anywhere in sight, and, if you didn't want them, they'd be as thick as blackberries, so Mrs. Slocum asked me to go, and I said I would. Katey said I oughtn't to, but I'm trying an experiment to-day of being just as good as I can be, to see what will happen—that's why I am trying to do everything Mrs. Slocum asks me to do. She thinks I am going now, but I've stopped to rest under a tree, and I am writing this note to you on top of a fence rail—it isn't very smooth.

*Please ask Dr. Ellen to come right back, because Mrs.*

Slocum is feeling so bad. She said no words could express her feelings, and no words can express mine, either, dear Mother Margaret, when I think how bad I want to see you.

Your loving child,

**BEE.**

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### LOST IN THE TRILLIUM WOODS

WHEN Bee pushed her note softly under Mother Margaret's door, she paused a moment to peep through the half-closed shutters before running away. To her surprise Miss Evelyn lay on the couch, looking so changed and ill that Bee was frightened. Mother Margaret sat by her side, holding her hand, and reading in soft but very clear tones. As Bee gazed upon Mother Margaret's sweet, placid face, and listened to her gentle voice through the open window, such a feeling of serene peace and quiet fell upon her that she wished she might never go away.

"I wouldn't mind being sick all the time if I could lie on a sofa and have Mother Margaret hold my hand and read to me like that," was the girl's selfish thought.

A little fire had been started on the hearth, evidently for the benefit of the invalid, for there was no chill in the sultry evening air. The flame sent a flickering glow over the polish of the old mahogany sideboard, which Bee could re-

member when her head only reached to the top when standing on tiptoe. Now it would be but a few inches above her waist. Over the sideboard hung a quaint old portrait of some family ancestor, a boy wearing a queue and a coat with white ruffles at the wrist. The gilt of the frame was dimmed, and the picture had been torn and patched, but Bee did not mind that. The boy was eating cherries off from a plate, and the plate and cherries were both so natural that Bee had a fondness for this picture.

In the opposite corner from the sideboard stood another friend of Bee's, the tall clock, reaching clear from the floor to the ceiling. It was so old that nobody knew how old it was, and Bee remembered how heavy the weights were, so that it had taxed all her strength when she had tried to move them. This clock was associated in Bee's mind with so many admonitions to promptness and punctuality that it seemed to speak to her now as its steady tick-tock, tick-tock, droned an accompaniment to Mother Margaret's reading.

On each side of the fireplace were two objects so surprising to Bee that she came near crying aloud, or clapping her hands, or at least whistling. One was James McCrystal reading a book. The other was Mary Hoffner with a flower in her hair bending over some delicate piece of needlework in which evidently she delighted. Bee under-

stood in the twinkling of an eye, how Mother Margaret's heart had opened to these two when Dr. Ellen had told their story, and also that this was a surprise the family had been saving up for her own home-coming.

Miss Hoffner and James both seemed to have their attention called to something Mother Margaret was reading, for they lifted their face toward her and listened. Dear Mother Margaret, how many times Bee had heard her read this same verse which seemed to impress itself on her, at this moment, as never before :

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

"How sweet she is in her voice—how sweet she looks," Bee exclaimed under her breath. "I want to go in. I want to give her a good hug.

Bee knew that if Mother Margaret caught a glimpse of her, there would be no return to the Cure that night, and as she did not wish even to have the appearance of being disobedient, the girl slipped quietly away. If she had gone straight home by the road all would have been well, but she cut across the garden where she was tempted to loiter and hunt for ripe red strawberries.

From the garden, it was only a step into the orchard where Bee stopped to look at her particular patch of four-leaved clovers, and she was quite delighted to find that it had not been dis-



MOTHER MARGARET  
*p. 160*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

turbed. She found not only four, but also five and six-leafed clovers. Brother Will had also told her about nine-leafed clovers, and clovers growing together in cunning little cups. These she could not find, so she contented herself by trying to see how the little three-leaf clover says its prayers and goes to sleep with its end leaf bowed over the two little side leaves which are folded like reverent palms. It was too early for the clovers to be sleeping yet, but there were little red pimpurnels tightly closed, a sure sign of rain.

Bee was next tempted to examine the green apples swelling so fast on the early apple trees, and finding one with a red streak on it, she bit into it. As she was now in the farthest corner of the orchard, it occurred to her that the nearest way home would be through the woods and maybe, on the way, she would come across some pink orchids. The evening was a pleasant one for being out of doors, and the tree stems were edged with gold in the blaze of the setting sun.

The orchids grew in a sandy part of the woods which was quite a little out of her way, and by the time Bee reached the spot where she had hoped to find them, the dusk was gathering rapidly around her. She was persistent in her search, however, kneeling down among the leaves, hoping to find some signs of this rare flower, but



as she stirred the leaves only a swarm of mosquitoes arose greeting her on every side with fierce needle-like stings.

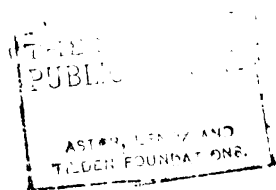
A blinding flash of lightning followed by a low mutter of thunder and a slight rattle of rain startled the girl to her feet. She was two miles away from home and the road through the woods a rough one. She must hurry. Now Bee fell into that error which always tempts one of her impulsive nature; she rushed on heedlessly without taking pains to see that the path she had chosen was the right one. In consequence, every step of the way became more difficult and presently instead of coming out upon the road she had expected to do, she ran up against the bars of a fence which she had not observed in the gathering darkness.

It was impossible to go back for in the blackness there was danger of stumbling into the nearby marsh. To stand still, with the storm coming on, was equally dangerous, so the girl, who with all her faults was never a coward, swung herself bravely over the fence and came down in a lot of briars that tore her dress ruthlessly. Bee was grieved about that. It was her pretty challie figured with forget-me-nots and rosebuds.

She perceived as she went on that the ground under her feet was now more even and that the underbrush was better cleared away, but still she



LOST IN THE TRILLIUM WOODS  
*p. 102*



had to make haste slowly, for once when she tried to hurry she caught her foot in the roots of a tree and was thrown to the ground. As Bee lay there quite still not knowing what else to do, she questioned in her breast :

“ Whatever has become of my guardian angel ? Seems as if he was always getting lost from me,” and then in the darkness and loneliness it came to the girl that she had herself parted company from her guardian angel when she had stopped to pick strawberries in the garden and to look for four-leaved clovers in the orchard, and take a tramp through the woods after orchids, when she should have gone straight away home. As these thoughts passed through her mind, she cried out with all her heart :

“ O Father in heaven, help me ! I am lost in the night with the storm coming on. Help a wicked little girl like me ! ”

As Bee stretched out her hands in appeal she touched something soft and velvety, a bit of moss, and she remembered all that Dr. Ellen had said to her about God’s wonderful care of the moss ; that he did not forget about the tiniest teeth on the tiniest cup, and the moss seemed saying to her in a still small voice :

“ He will not forget thee.”

At this moment there came a terrific flash of lightning followed by a heavy reverberating roll

of thunder and a fresh downpour of rain. Bee sprang to her feet instantly and sped through the darkness with all possible swiftness, for the lightning had revealed to her a smooth grassy road winding through the woods. When she was confused she would stop and wait for another flash to show her the way, and they came not infrequently, accompanied more than once by a frightful crash of thunder as some tall tree top was splintered. Once in the blinding glare, when balls of fire seemed rolling around her, Bee clasped her hands over her eyes and then there came to her the sound of Mother Margaret's gentle, placid voice giving her fresh courage :

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

"Help me—help me, Heavenly Father!" the girl cried, as she ran on, stumbling often, sometimes falling, but always bounding to her feet and groping her way on bravely.

It seemed to her about midnight; and she felt she had gone miles through the woods, for she was so exhausted from fatigue she could hardly stand on her feet, when one last flash of lightning revealed a rough shed, that promised shelter. Bee recognized it joyfully as a house Brother Will had built for his men when they were out watching the maple sugar boil in the vat nearby. The door was only an opening in the rough boards,

but inside, Bee knew where she would find a key hanging on a rusted nail which would open a closet, and in this closet was kept a pair of dry blankets, one of brother Will's old coats, a lantern and a box of matches. As she stepped inside, Bee could fairly have cried with gratitude for this rude shelter.

Lighting the lantern, Bee discovered a bed of hemlock boughs and dry leaves already made up in the corner, which was an unexpected comfort. Taking off her wet jacket and shoes, and putting out the lantern, she wrapped herself up snug and warm in the blankets and then crept under brother Will's coat so as to be entirely out of sight. By her little chatelaine watch it was just ten o'clock.

The wind blew and rocked the branches outside, the rain came in torrents and peals of thunder resounded through the roar of the storm, but Bee in her dry warm bed felt only the delicious sense of shelter and protection such as a bird feels in its nest, for she knew that the wings of Everlasting Love brooded over her and kept her from all harm.

The next morning a fresh breeze was stirring the wet leaves that glistened in the faint light, and a long while before sunrise, it seemed to Bee, the wood birds began to sing. Their first notes were faint and timid as if a few early ones hardly

dared to waken their sleepy neighbors, but by the time a bundle of glistening sunbeams came thrusting themselves through the leaves, a whole chorus of birds were singing all kinds of musical discords as if they were fairly mad with joy. In this jubilee, Bee arose and dressed herself, washing in a spring near by, then plaited her hair while the dearest little squirrel, frisking from one bough to another overhead, kept her company with its chatter.

After refreshing herself with the sparkling clear spring water, which she drank from a cup made of leaves, she put everything in order in the closet and hung the key once more on its rusty nail. The sunrise was now shining like bright colored ribbons through the trees, and a few moments' walk brought her to the edge of the woods where she could overlook Mother Margaret's home. The peacock in splendid plumage was standing on the stone fence, the sunlights and shadows were capering over a bean-field that lay near the house, and across it, a mother turkey was just starting out with her brood for the day.

"Henery!" "Henery!" Miss Carlotta's shrill voice was calling across the way, and Henry Primrose himself in fresh blue overalls could be seen going to the barn while a flock of white leg-horn hens followed at his heels.

"One should always keep near home when

they get lost," soliloquized Bee, and then began laughing at Henry Primrose whose overalls being cut after a pattern of Miss Carlotta's own devising, were so short and wide they flapped at every step like pantalets as he strode along. The girl was going as fast as her feet could carry her down a grassy bank toward the open road when she heard a familiar voice saying with anxious accents :

"Mink, good Mink, hurry up, Mink. It's the King's business, Mink!" and turning, Bee now saw Dr. Ellen close upon her.

"You miserable little wretch!" exclaimed Dr. McGregor, helping her young charge into the phaeton.

"Has Mrs. Slocum been doing something worse?" asked Bee, startled by Dr. Ellen's face, so white and tired.

"It is not Mrs. Slocum, Bee," returned Dr. Ellen, gravely, "it is yourself. We have been looking for you all night."

She had it out with Bee then, and the girl thought Dr. Ellen looked stern as she listened to the story of her night's adventure; but all at once the Thirteenth of First Corinthians stooped down and tenderly kissed her child.

"You were a dear to obey, and not go in when you reached Mother Margaret's. For two weeks Miss Evelyn has been lying dangerously ill, and at the least shock she might have died



instantly. Thank God, you were an obedient child."

"Thank God," repeated Bee, trembling all over at the thought of what might have happened. "My guardian angel did stand by me, but I was wicked, Dr. Ellen, and got myself lost from him."

"But you tried to be good."

"Yes, I tried."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A FIELD OF DAISIES

A FEW days later, when Bee was allowed to return to Mother Margaret, her delight knew no bounds, and she ran into the house a dozen times a day to print a kiss upon the lady's cheek.

"Now don't spoil the child!" Dr. Ellen had entreated, seeing Mother Margaret baking a milk pan full of her famous sugar cookies cut with the palm-leaf cutter.

"That child has such a good disposition you couldn't spoil her," returned Mother Margaret, which reply made Bee so ashamed that she only ate one cooky when she had intended to put at least six in her pocket.

"It is very bad to eat even one," she apologized to Mother Margaret, as she swallowed the last crumb. "Dr. Ellen doesn't let me eat between meals any more since I am grown up. Oh, Mother Margaret, I get so tired of being grown up. I wish I were your little girl once more."

"You are my little girl just as long as you live. You can take a plate of these cookies over to Aunt Carlotta while they are warm, and inquire how Miss Evelyn is this morning."

"Miss Evelyn says she feels most well this morning," said Bee, running in breathless a few minutes later, "and she would like to have you come over and see her—and Billy Downs has invited James McCrystal up in his cherry tree—and Postscript wants Mary Hoffner and me to go with her after daisies over in the pasture' "

"I think you can!"

"Oh goody!—it's more fun going anywhere with Mary Hoffner or James. Everything is so new to them—they don't know anything about lambs, or bees, or wild flowers, and they can't tell one bird from another, so we have a chance to tell them such a lot of things. You should have seen James this morning. He stood perfectly still for an hour watching the pigs and the chickens; then we took him to the barn with us where they were loading wheat into the loft with pulleys. It was the greatest lark, Mother Margaret; one of the pulleys gave way and the bundles of wheat came tumbling down around us in a perfect shower. James was so amazed, and Barney frisked his tail and barked and ran round and round just like a circus, and Mary Hoffner laughed till she cried. Here she comes

now with her basket for the daisies, and Dr. Ellen is with her."

"You persuade Dr. Ellen to go with you," advised Mother Margaret. "An hour out in the sunshine this morning will do her good."

Dr. Ellen allowed-herself to be persuaded, and Bee, with her friend Primrose, led the way to a hillside field where the ground was stony and hardly anything grew but daisies. There were millions of them shining in the sunlight until the field looked like a bride's dress in its purity and loveliness. They found other flower children out in the field too, and they were down on their knees, carefully selecting the largest, finest blossoms, and cutting long stems. Overhead, between the clouds and the field somewhere, a meadow lark was caroling out its gladness, and the brook at the foot of the hill washed over its pebbles with a perpetual rhythm that was like music.

"Can you hear what the brook is saying?" Bee asked, as she brought a bunch of daisies to Dr. Ellen. Mary Hoffner had thoughtfully spread a shawl down for Dr. Ellen in the midst of the children, and she was tying up bunches as they picked them.

"All is well! All is well! That is what the brook is saying to me," returned the Thirteenth of First Corinthians gently.

"But it is not well!" Bee burst out passionately. "There are millions of these flowers going to waste in the fields while the little children down there in the city streets are hungry for them. One little fresh air child who visited Aunt Carlotta last summer darted for the rail fence the moment she was set down and scrambling under it she threw herself face down among the daisies, clasping them in her arms and sobbing as if her heart would break. Think of any one so hungry for flowers as that. Don't you think, Dr. Ellen, when God made so many flowers, he meant them to go all round?"

"I certainly do, child, and sometime when the kingdom comes, they will go all round." Putting down her daisies, Dr. Ellen now consulted her watch.

"You don't happen to know of any nice daisy story, Dr. Ellen?" asked Bee, seeing there was imminent danger of Dr. Ellen running away, and thinking this device might prolong her stay.

"I might think of a five-minute story," returned Dr. Ellen, putting back her watch.

"Myra," called Bee, to her helper, "bring the children together. Dr. Ellen is going to tell us a story about daisies."

"It is the daisy who will begin to speak," said Dr. Ellen, smiling upon her interested young audience as she held up before their eager eyes a

large daisy and showed them how it was made up of a multitude of tiny yellow blossoms and white ray blossoms. Each one would be weak and useless alone, but when the many yellow flowerets are drawn close together in one head and encircled with these pure white rays, they make together this beautiful blossom which is named daisy, or "day's eye."

"Now can any one find me a clover top? Here is Onalee, she has one all ready for me. Do you see, children, this flower is also made up of a great number of little butterfly-shaped blossoms keeping house together in one family. One little clover alone could never hold up its head to the sun and the bee, but together they bob about merrily. Yes, Bee, the dandelion is another of this kind of blossoms, and when the rain and night comes, one green hood is drawn up over them all."

"Isn't that cunning!" said Postscript, examining the flower with interest.

"And here comes Grace Mary with black-eyed Susans," cried the other children. "Have they any story?"

"Yes," said Dr. Ellen, laying one in her palm, "it is the same story; do you see the multitude of little black lilies crowded together and the ray flowers standing about like a disk of gold? Now, children, as it is with flowers, so it is with the

grass and the leaves. One grass blade standing alone would be of small service, but a great many of them, working humbly and obediently together, carpet the field in green. Nothing is more fitting for angels to walk over on earth or in heaven than a stretch of green grass flowered over with buttercups and daisies. A dozen leaves cannot make a tree grow, and a sprinkle of stars cannot make the night shine, but working all together, the leaves are able to pull the trees up nearer to the sky, and the stars are strong to do God's will in the splendor of the heavens."

"A few little girls cannot gather flowers enough for all the children begging at Pastor Joyce's gate, if they work ever so hard," commented Bee, looking sober.

"No, dear," returned Dr. Ellen, "but if they should work and I should work and everybody should work together like the bees and the flowers and the stars; if no one were ever cross, and no one ever shirked there would be neither hunger nor thirst any more—all tears would be wiped away. It would be heaven here now."

"Were you going to tell us a real story, Dr. Ellen?" asked Bee, fearful lest Dr. Ellen at this point was preparing to go.

Dr. Ellen looked at her watch—it was growing late.



**ANNA GORDON, BLESSED MOTHER OF THE L. T. L. CHILDREN**

*p. 175*



THE  
NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
ASTOR LENOX  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS  
125 WEST 47TH STREET  
NEW YORK 10019

"Only five minutes more, children, and then I must leave you. The story is about working together, and it begins with being thirsty. You children here in the country, with that clear brook running through the fields and cool springs welling up on every side among the hills, never know what it is to suffer with thirst. Now in the city these hot days, with the sun heating the stones and mortar and brick until they become a fiery oven, it is natural that one should feel a fierce burning thirst. Strange as it may seem, provision is seldom made for public drinking fountains. A man may be at work miles and miles away from his home with no place near by where a drink of water can be had unless he goes to a saloon. When a generous-spirited man goes into a saloon, he feels that it is mean to ask for a glass of water unless he takes something else he can pay for, and so he is tempted to call for a glass of beer. The first glass leads to the second, and the poor man, before he is aware of his danger, is well on the road to destruction.

"Knowing of this great need in the City of Chicago, Anna Gordon, our blessed mother of the L.T.L. children, asked them to provide a drinking fountain. It would cost two thousand dollars."

"That was asking a great deal of the little children," interrupted Bee.

"How could they do it!" exclaimed one and another of the flower children.

"There were so many of the children that each one needed to give but a few pennies," continued Dr. Ellen, "and these pennies they must earn themselves so that the fountain might be entirely their own. One little boy in Wales earned his pennies by going a long distance after the mail for his mother. In Canada, India, Norway, Burmah, Chili, Australia, and other countries, the children set diligently to work, and I wish I could read you some of the curious and interesting letters they sent telling how they earned this money. Some of the children did not even know where Chicago was, and one little girl in South Africa thought it might be in Patagonia. Finally the pennies were all sent in and the fountain was raised. It is the figure of a little girl holding a cup in her hands. All day long the water, pure and sparkling, runs over the edge of this cup to give thirsty people a drink, and we are told that business men go blocks out of their way to get a drink from the hands of this little girl.

"The beautiful part of the story, children, is this. As the stars are netted together and strong to do his will, so willing hearts are held together by the strongest thing in this world, and that is pitying love. As we tied up these little bunches of flowers this morning, we need not feel that we

are working alone. Out here in the country, where the clouds are pure and unstained, where the trees are standing up to sing, and the dew and transparent shadows spread such velvet coolness over the grass, Bee and Myra and Helen and Onalee gather the fresh flowers. Down there in the burning heat of the city, Pastor Joyce and his children will be giving them out. And this work is going on all over this country, and even around the world. They are carried to the children in tenements, to the sick in hospitals, and baskets of them go out in little boats to be distributed among the sailors. I have been out in the flower-boats myself, and as we would go bobbing up and down over the waves, we could see the sailors watching for our coming. Then you should hear them call out: 'Here's the bouquet sisters!' and see the younger men race the whole length of the deck to make sure of getting a bunch of flowers, for there were not always enough to go around. One man, as he looked admiringly at his gift, exclaimed: 'First flowers I've seen for four months.'

"You don't know how glad these boys are to have flowers for their sick comrades. Not only do they set aside money to buy flowers for them, but they read to them and write their letters and pray with them. Souls are brought to Christ and a splendid work is being done.

“ Oh, children, if the radiance from the clouds could fall upon us and open our eyes at this moment, I believe we should see about us a company of angels, and we should know that we are working together with multitudes on earth and in heaven, carrying out God's plans for good.”



ON AN ERRAND OF MERCY

*p. 179*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

## CHAPTER XXX

### IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

IN the village, the flower children met together on Myra's back stoop, and packed two lovely boxes of pansies and sweet peas and sent them to the station, while Marguerite was sent out on an errand of mercy, with a basket of lilies and other choice flowers to brighten the day for some who were sick. The girls wondered why Bee did not send in her daisies, but Bee, in the meantime, was having her own tribulations.

The showy, black-eyed Susans had been placed in a deep pail of water on the south side of the house and forgotten. When Bee went to look for them at noon she found the sun blazing down upon them and the flowers so wilted as to be unfit to send. With Mary Hoffner she went to the pasture directly after dinner and gathered a lot more, but flowers gathered in the heat of the day wither quickly, and it was only by putting them directly in cool water they could be persuaded to hold up their heads. While Bee was



gathering the black-eyed Susans, the sun had come round to the well-curb, where she had left her more delicate garden flowers, and they were seriously injured.

"How can I have any flowers when the sun keeps running around the house so?" grieved Bee, going to Mother Margaret for comfort. "It's too warm to have them in the house, and I can't be moving those heavy pails of water around every hour."

"Never mind, child, we will try to manage better next time. Your daisies look nice and bright, and here come the boys with their arms full of chestnut boughs."

"If you aren't good!" cried Bee, thinking she had never seen nicer-looking boys than Billy Downs and Henry Primrose, even if they did wear blue overalls and ragged straw hats. Birds'-Nest Jack, who had been out in the hay field with James McCrystal, now appeared with three birds' nests and four little baby rabbits.

"Did you steal these birds' nests, Jack?" Bee inquired, with a searching glance at the boy's face.

"I declare across my heart I found 'em over there on the edge of the field where the wind blew 'em out o' that black oak."

"Very well, Jack, I thank you for the birds' nests and I can use them; but the wind never

blew these little baby rabbits out of their nests. You take them straight back to their mother." There was a resolute tone in Bee's voice which made Jack think that it would be best to obey.

"Is Jack what you'd call a hoodlum?" asked James, as he helped Bee in his slow, deliberate way to pack the daisies. James had been stoned more than once by the hoodlums who lived on his block in the city, and he had good reason to keep away from them.

"Jack is not a hoodlum out here, but I don't know what he might have been if he had been turned loose on your street, James. Some folks call him Birds'-Nest Jack, because he is always after birds' eggs and birds' nests, but the other day I saw him jump down from a hayrack and tear through the big gate just in time to pick up a baby robin before the horses stepped on it. You should have seen the loving way he cuddled that little robin in his hand as he carried it back to a safe place. There's lots of good in a boy like Jack, but it's like the music in Aunt Carlotta's old melodeon, it is only somebody like Miss Evelyn, who knows enough to get it out."

Henry Primrose now came over again, this time bringing a currant bush, or more strictly speaking, a part of a currant bush, which he had found growing down the road a ways, where there used to be a house. With Henry came Anne,

bearing a huge bunch of catnip, which Aunt Carlotta was sending to sick babies.

"What shall we do?" groaned Bee, gazing now at the currant bush so resplendent with its bunches of crystalline red currants, and now at the catnip so desirable for sick babies, and then at her boxes which were already full and overflowing, and wouldn't stretch any more.

"There's a wooden box in our barn with a lid on it. Aunt Carlotta told me to bring it from the village for the speckled hen to set in, and I kep' forgetting it so many times the speckled hen changed her mind and now she won't set. Jes' you wait a minute!"

In less time than it takes to tell about it, Henry came flying back with the box, which proved to be just the thing for the daisies, with the chestnut leaves at the top and the bottom, and the currant bush in the middle, while the catnip was put in a box all by itself. Mary Hoffner helped to put on the wrapping paper, folding it under neatly at each end to make the package look trim and tidy, for she had practiced on so many parcels she could do this kind of work to perfection.

James ran away with Barney to bring in the cows and now as they were finishing the boxes, Mary Hoffner told the girls what a merciful providence it was that Mother Margaret had the boy

come out here on the farm. The sisters and his mother had been invited by one of her patrons to a country place by the seaside where Mrs. McCrystal could sew in return for their board. Here the fresh air would make Kathleen well again, for the poor little thing was drooping and ill from the heat; but this would have left James to walk the streets all day alone, if Dr. Ellen had not written to Mary Hoffner to bring him along with her.

"The pigs and cows and chickens are the greatest show on earth to James," concluded Mary Hoffner, tying the twine in a firm knot, "and isn't it fine that for once in his life he has all the milk he can drink?"

"He confided to me that he doesn't like that thick yellow scum on top," said Bee. "He isn't used to it."

"Well, I like everything," said Mary Hoffner, looking up at the flecks through the green leaves. "It has put a new heart into me. Did you know that Dr. McGregor is going to give me a chance to study for a trained nurse and I am beginning my work by waiting upon that beautiful Miss Evelyn. It was Miss Evelyn sent me over here to help you because she couldn't come."

"That's just like Miss Evelyn," said Bee. "Bless her sweet heart!"

When the boxes were all ready and Mary

Hoffner had returned to Miss Evelyn, Bee went to the barn thinking she would harness a horse and take the boxes directly in to the express office. What was her astonishment to find the barn entirely empty, as every horse was in use, it being the busiest time of the year.

"Mother Margaret will never let one of the horses go out after they've worked hard all day. Postscript, what shall we do?"

"Let's go upstairs and look out from your window and see if any one is coming," suggested Postscript.

Mother Margaret was resting, so the two girls went softly up to Bee's chamber with its white muslin curtains drifting apart at the windows to let in the sweet air scented with new-mown clover bloom. It was a neat room, for Mother Margaret, both a Quaker and a Puritan by descent, had impressed upon Bee's mind that order was a part of godliness. Almost everything in this simple low-roofed room was white, from the white lamb's-wool rug on the floor, to the white center-table covered with a linen square hemstitched by Mother Margaret's own careful hands. A few simple pictures framed in white hung on the wall—and at the foot of the little white bed were printed in golden letters these words :

*"You have trusted him in a few things and he has not failed you. Trust him now for everything*

*and see if he does not do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you could ever ask or think."*

The girls looked out of the window but there was no help in sight; no, not even so much as a cloud of dust.

"Who put that on the foot of your bed?" asked Postscript, reading over the motto.

"Dr. Ellen hung it there; she has them printed for her patients and she calls them prescriptions. We've got to try it now, Postscript."

"Try what?" asked Postscript in doubt.

"We've got to pray that somebody will come and get our flower mission box."

"But it's too late—the sun is going down," and Postscript looked out at the western sky where the light from the sun was stretching out in long wings.

In reply, Bee took down her little blue morocco Bible from a meagerly filled book-shelf and opening to Matthew twenty-one, twenty-two, pointed out to her friend these words penciled round and round :

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

"Pray, you little sinner!" entreated Bee, going down on her knees, and Postscript did as she was bid.

"Aunt Carlotta!" said Postscript, telling that good woman about this circumstance afterwards,

"when we went downstairs, the boxes hadn't moved a bit, they were right there—and not so much as a wheel anywhere in sight."

"Of course not," ejaculated Aunt Carlotta, "the Lord doesn't work miracles these days."

"But, listen, Aunt Carlotta—we looked around to the side of the house and if there wasn't Myra Fuller's mother come with a horse and buggy after berries, and when we asked if she could take our boxes to the station she said :

"Of course, I should be glad to do it."

"Then Bee and I just hugged her because she was the answer to our prayer.

A few days later the following letter came to Bee and her flower children, which made them feel they had been working with God and his angels when they gathered the daisies :

"Four large boxes of flowers came Saturday morning. They were as fresh and bright as though they had just been gathered. Hardly a petal was crushed ; not one pansy was withered. The sweet peas were unusually fine with so many delicate tints and shades of color. After I had given to our children, I gave yellow and white daisies to the street children. I stood in the churchyard and handed a daisy to a child. Then the crowd came. There were fully three hundred clamoring for daisies. They almost mobbed me. I was compelled to retreat behind the iron gate. Women with babes in arms came down from the tenements, and grim and grizzled men passing by held out their dirty hands for a pure, white daisy. After the daisies were gone the children begged for the leaves from the chestnut blossoms, I gave a leaf to a child. Even a

green leaf brought joy to a child's heart. I have never before known of flowers bringing joy to so many hearts as these that you and your friends sent, and how I enjoyed giving them to the children. We thank you all most heartily for the beautiful flowers. It is wonderfully good in you to send them. It is so like what Jesus would do if he had a flower garden."



## CHAPTER XXXI

### A CLEAR BEAUTIFUL NIGHT OF STARS

THE family were all out under the maple trees this summer evening and Brother Will was reading a recipe for making good children :

“One large grassy field, a brook, pebbly if possible, and half a dozen flower children.”

“Now, Brother Will,” interrupted Bee, “you know you are not reading it straight.”

“Three lambs and one or two dogs about the size of Barney——”

“Aren’t there any hens?” questioned James, who was listening with interest.

“Might be a flock of hens,” admitted Brother Will, balancing his glasses between his thumb and finger.

“Now, Brother Will, you know you are making it different!” expostulated Bee.

“Mix the children with the dogs and the lambs and the hens——”

“And cows,” suggested James.

“And a few very mild cows, and empty them

into a green field, stirring continually. Sprinkle the field with flowers——”

“And berry bushes,” put in Bee.

“Pour a brook gently over the pebbles. Cover all with a deep blue sky. Bake in a very hot sun. When the children are well browned and freckled——”

“Now, Brother Will, freckled isn’t in it!”

“The children that pinch may be removed——”

“Don’t have the children removed,” entreated Mother Margaret, who had come out just in time to hear the last words.

“Oh, mother, you are such fun,” said Will, placing her chair and wrapping her fleecy shawl carefully around her.

“I have told you a hundred times, William Eldbridge, that I could not abide a house without children.”

“That’s where you are different from my mother,” said Mr. Laurie bowing his head respectfully to Margaret Eldbridge. “She used to say she could not bide in the house when the bairns were all there—but then there’s a difference in bairns, we know.”

Mr. Laurie and William Eldbridge had once been chums in the University of Edinburgh, and this was the reason why the Scotchman was spending his brief vacation at Glenchase.

“Will has been telling us what a fine time he

had visiting your friends in Edinburgh," said Dr. Ellen, "and of the wheeling to Roslyn, Montrose, and along the banks of the Tweed."

"Oh, he has been telling me about it until I am desperate to see even a Scotch pebble to say nothing of my nearest kin."

"You are no stranger to any of us here," said Mother Margaret kindly. "Even Miss Guillard must feel that she is acquainted with you by this time, she has heard us speak of you so often."

Miss Evelyn's face could hardly be discerned in the shadows and she remained silent.

"Why did you never write and thank Miss Evelyn and me for that box of pink hawthorn we sent you?" asked Bee impetuously during this pause. "I wrote both our names on the cover."

"I have no excuse whatever," returned Mr. Laurie penitently, "only when Miss Lavinia opened the box, she carefully destroyed it together with the wrapping and string, so that I had no clue whatever as to the donor."

"Oh!" said Bee somewhat mollified.

"Bee has become a flower mission fiend," exclaimed William Eldbridge.

"And has she interested you in her work also?" asked Dr. Ellen.

"Interested me—she has me up at four o'clock in the morning gathering posies on her flower

mission days. I encourage her in it because I believe these flower mission girls gathering daisies and yarrow and moth mullein are going to rid the land of a good many weeds, and it's a good thing."

"Of course it's a good thing, William," said Mother Margaret. "Mr. Laurie, William was so interested that he packed a whole box himself."

"Yes, of bachelor's buttons and mourning brides, mother's favorite flowers. I think now of starting a flower farm."

"It wouldn't be a bad thing," said Mr. Laurie. "They have them in England."

"Mother Margaret," said Bee, drawing close to her, "this is just the night for star stories. What is that one about the man with the bundle of sticks in the moon?"

"A man with a bundle on his back was traveling on Sunday, child, when he was met by a fairy who asked him why he worked on the Sabbath."

"He replied, 'Sunday on earth or Monday in heaven, it is all one to me.'"

"'Then carry your bundle forever,' the fairy answered. 'As you have no regard for Sunday on earth, take your perpetual Monday in heaven, and travel with the moon.'"

"How many thoughts and fancies come fluttering down to us from those silver balconies!" observed Mr. Laurie, who was by nature a poet.

"James will be interested in the Pleiades," said Brother Will. "They are sometimes called the hen and chickens; Alcyone being the 'golden cluck-hen.' Sometimes this star is fancied a girl feeding the brood."

"And some have a fancy that Alcyone, the golden cluck-hen, might be the central sun of the whole universe—and that it might be heaven," added Donald Laurie.

"And how can we get there?" asked James, believing that a country with a golden cluck-hen would be worth visiting.

"There used to be a fancy in old times, James," said Dr. Ellen, "that we come home to heaven by the Milky Way—Do you see it overhead—

" 'A broad and ample road whose dust is gold.' "

"Think of that broad pathway of star-dust winding past shining palaces and shimmering gardens! The heart cannot imagine what our Heavenly Father has prepared for us in those far mansions. Our faith is strengthened, though, by these nightly visions of jeweled foundations and gates of pearl. What are you thinking of, Evelyn, dear?" taking that young woman's hand.

"I was thinking of some poet's fancy about

"The million lilled stream of night  
Which in ethereal meadows flow,"

and then of Bee, how she would like to gather

## *A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT OF STARS* 193

them for her flower mission ; those heavenly lilies that are never broken in any storm." Miss Evelyn's face was beautiful as she lifted it in the starlight. "I was thinking too, if I should go to-night, the mansions he prepares for us are not so far away. Christ did not tell us that. They are as near to me as you all are to-night. Heaven is where love is, and Love is the way."

Later in the evening, Will declared that stars needed music to twinkle by, and brought out his zither to accompany Mr. Laurie in some old college songs. Mother Margaret went into the house with James. Miss Evelyn leaned on Mary Hoffner's shoulder as if she were wearied, while Bee sat enraptured with her arm around Dr. Ellen.

As the shadows deepened around them Donald took the instrument into his own hands and sang the old Scotch song :

"'Oh wert thou in the cauld blast  
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,  
My plaidie to the angry airt  
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee ;  
Or did misfortune's bitter storms  
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,  
My bosom to the wildest blast,  
I'd share it a', I'd share it a'."

Miss Evelyn, who had risen to depart, stood leaning against a sheltering tree for a moment,

then slipped to the ground like a snowdrift. It was Mr. Laurie who caught her up in his arms as if he had the right, and with tenderness carried her into the house.

Dr. Ellen and Mary Hoffner followed them, but a little later they came out weeping.

"What is the matter?" asked Bee in affright.

"Oh, it is all made up between the lovers, and Mother Margaret was crying and Evelyn and Mr. Laurie were both crying out of pure happiness, and we couldn't help it—we had to cry too."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### BITTERSWEET.

"WHERE is everybody?" asked Dr. Ellen one autumn evening, running in to find Bee sitting alone before the fire.

"Aunt Carlotta sent for Mother Margaret to spend the evening with her, and Brother Will is at work on his book. He says it must be finished this week or the publisher will finish him as a robin would snap up a worm."

"How bright the bittersweet is over the mantel and looking-glass."

"Isn't it pretty? Mary Hoffner and I gathered a lot of it this afternoon, and this string we made purposely for you," and Bee hastened to wreath the bright berries around Dr. Ellen's neck.

"Mary is a good girl and so faithful. Every one likes her at the Cure. With training she is going to make one of our best nurses."

"Mother Margaret has just had letters from the McCrystals," said Bee, stirring the fire. "Mrs. McCrystal says she hardly knew James when he came back, his face was so brown and



his legs were so stout, and he is telling them endless stories of pigs and chickens.

"I had a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Laurie to-day, written from London," said Dr. Ellen. "They are both of the same mind, that it is heaven where love is."

"How odd it was—their meeting here!"

"I was thinking of that, too. How strangely tangled the circumstances of our lives seem to be, but when we look back on them, as Mr. and Mrs. Laurie are looking back, the pattern is clear and beautiful."

"Dr. Ellen, do you ever look back?"

"The bittersweet carries me back to-night. Such quantities used to grow on the Cranesbill farm," and Dr. Ellen turned the berries about in her fingers as if they were jewels.

"Yes, we went over there, and you should have seen how it was wreathed all over the fences, with berries as red as sealing wax, and all tangled in with it were the wild grapevines, colored bright with the frost."

"I was past there the other day," said Dr. Ellen, "and I saw the grape leaves, all yellow and pink, and the sumac flaming up like a row of cardinals, and the bittersweet twined in and out just as it used to be when I was a little girl. Your mother lived on the Cranesbill farm when I was a child; her family were our neighbors on

one side, and John Slocum on the other, so we children used to go berrying and nutting together on our way to and from the country school. There was one thicket of hazel nuts and blackberry bushes in a pasture field we particularly loved, and this field was owned by an Englishman, who had recently come into the neighborhood. He put up a conspicuous notice :

NO TRESPASSING,

but we children did not mind the notice any more than the bees or squirrels did, and one day, when we had climbed over the fence as usual, and were filling our baskets with hazel nuts, the man himself appeared, glowering and flourishing his walking-stick furiously. We were as frightened as if a bear had come after us. While I was tumbling after them as fast as I could, I caught my foot in the bittersweet and wild grapevines, and there I hung until a boy, who was at the man's heels, came bounding over the fence and rescued me.

"The cross old man was your Grandfather Kent, and George Kent, his son, was my fast friend from that day. He did not get on very well with his father, and he left home while still very young. He came back, though, to marry your mother, and then John Slocum's heart was broken. I remember it was the time for bittersweet, and

Carolyn wore it in her hair the last time we were walking together. She had such pretty hair.

"When I was ten years old we moved to the city, where my father was in business. From that time Carolyn and I always kept up a correspondence and visited each other back and forth. John Slocum also came to the city, was taken into the business with my father, and proved himself to be a man of such good judgment and sterling character that in time he became a partner. They made a comfortable fortune, and in after years John married a lively, generous-hearted girl, who was interested like himself in in church work and charities. At her father's death Mrs. Slocum inherited several millions, which was a great misfortune, for since that time she has become the hard, worldly, selfish woman we know to-day. Their daughter, Eloise, is the one piece of comfort John has in his life."

"Why is Mrs. Slocum so unhappy, Dr. Ellen?"

"Because, poor woman, she has wandered away so pitifully from the true way of life and love, it is pitiful. Shut up within her miserable self, if left alone for a moment, she feels the blackness of despair. When she goes home to-morrow, I must go with her, and if she needs me very much, I shall not come back."

"Not come back!" cried Bee in dismay.

"Why, Dr. Ellen, what shall we do? What will Mother Margaret and Brother Will do? Have you told them about it?"

"Not yet, dear, but I must. I have told you, child, that you may understand better why I put you in such a hard place 'as room-mate with Mrs. Slocum. She could not be left alone. She wearied of the nurse, and you were like Eloise, running in and out. I know she abused you, and did not seem to care for the flowers, but you were a piece of sunshine to her, and you have helped her more than you can imagine."

"I wish I'd done it better," said Bee, feeling ashamed of the many times she had hated Mrs. Slocum.

"We all wish we could do better, child."

"But, Dr. Ellen," cried Bee, bewildered in her grief, "you said you might not come back. What will the Cure do, and Grandma Amesbry, and the cat, and Mink, and everybody?"

"Another physician is coming in my place, and things will go on just the same."

"But why do you go?"

"It all comes from your flower mission, Bee. You have talked so much about those little children down there, and read so many of their letters, that through all the hardness of her nature there has soaked into Mrs. Slocum's heart the desire to help somebody. She has promised me

that she will support a dispensary and a crèche among the very poor, if I will only go back with her and be within reach when she needs me. It is a chance to do so much for Mrs. Slocum herself and for the poor little children Christ loves."

"Doesn't he love me and Postcript and Grace Mary? Don't we need you?" There was a pitiful little wail in Bee's voice.

"In my heart, dear, I am always with you, but the other children need me more, and I am hungry to go to them. Shall I tell you the whole story, Bee? Can you bear it?" Dr. Ellen's face was so white and drawn that the tears sprang into Bee's eyes.

"I can bear anything for love of you, Dr. Ellen," and Bee drew near her friend, "but not if it hurts you."

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### DR. ELLEN'S STORY

"ABOUT the time your mother, Carolyn, was married," began Dr. Ellen, looking into the red heart of the glowing fire, "my father was taken from us. Afterwards, my mother and I went abroad, ostensibly that I might study music and the languages, but really that we might idle away our time and spend our money. It was one afternoon in Verona that I seemed first to waken to the real meaning of life. We were walking in a beautiful garden when we heard bells tolling as for a funeral. It was Friday afternoon at the hour of three and we asked the gardener who had died.

He looked at us as if incredulous of our ignorance, and then said reverently :

"Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

"Evidently this poor gardener considered us as heathen, for we found afterwards it was the time-honored custom of the city to ring the bells at this hour on Friday in memory of the Lord's death on the cross.

"Near by was a pool of water where the ivy tumbled luxuriantly about, and where an oak tree threw its shadow over a stone bench. There my dear mother and I sat down to rest and we spoke to each other penitently of the little time we had given in these last years to thinking of that best Friend, 'Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.' I remember perfectly how the cypress trees lifted the dark green foliage of their chiseled foliage against the pale blue of the sky, and how the warm air was filled with the murmur of sugar-loving bees and the musky fragrance of opening roses. It was my eighteenth birthday and this was our last hour of happiness together.

"Upon returning to our hotel we found letters telling us of financial misfortune which came upon us like a thunder-bolt out of a clear sky, but oh, how swiftly the clouds followed after that. We hurried home to find that through our own extravagant living, and the speculations and dishonesty of my father's agent, whom we had trusted to manage our financial affairs, not only was our whole fortune dissipated, but we were left fifty thousand dollars in debt. Our house, a beautiful country seat some little distance from the city, our jewels, plate, everything, went to satisfy this indebtedness.

"My mother, who had been frail in health for a long time, could not endure the shock, and she

died within a few weeks. I now found myself friendless, penniless, and alone. The business manager, who professed extreme anguish of mind at the turn things had taken, advised me to pack the few valuables our creditors had refused to take from us, and go with him to the city where in a few hours' time he could secure for me a lucrative position. I loathed this man, but not knowing what else to do, I packed two trunks with my clothing, books, and a few precious treasures, among them my mother's miniature set in solid gold. Upon arriving in the station my seeming friend asked for my checks, and taking me to a hotel in a part of the city which was utterly strange to me, he bid me remain until he should return with news of a position. I waited until late in the afternoon when I telegraphed to his office only to receive word that he had just left town to be absent for a number of months. I took a cab and tried to look for my trunks at the station, but this was useless, as I had no checks to present for them. I returned to the hotel to ask them to help me in my search, when to my amazement, I was told that no woman travelling alone and without baggage could remain there overnight. The proprietor was regretful, but this was the inflexible rule.

"I went out on the street with a dazed feeling, not knowing what to do."



"I should think you would have asked a policeman," suggested Bee.

"That is just what I did. I asked the first one I met where I could find a decent lodging-house. The reply he gave me was so insulting that every drop of blood in my veins seemed turned to liquid fire. After that I was afraid to speak to any one, or ask for any directions.

"Once, near midnight, when utterly exhausted with fatigue, I dropped down on a seat in a little park. An elderly woman, dressed decently in black, was sitting there, and I did not feel afraid of her until she asked me to go home with her. As she turned toward me her bloated face and bleared eyes, and as her breath, strong with alcohol, came into my face, I turned from her and fled as from death itself.

"On and on, through the long black hours of the night, I walked, accompanied by such bitter thoughts that my brain fairly gave way with the cruelty of it all. When the dawn came, gray and ghastly, I seemed no longer to recognize myself in the poor homeless creature from whose heart the last ray of joy and hope had been crushed out.

"For three days and three nights I walked the streets, not knowing what else to do. Once, in my long, long wanderings, I came into a hand-

some street, and, glancing at a stone block as I passed by, I saw on it cut in plain letters :

JOHN SLOCUM.

“With a great bound of joy I hastened up the steps to the door. If I could only find John, my father’s friend, I should be safe. Upon inquiry I found that John Slocum was out of town and my interview with Mrs. Slocum was a brief one. She came into the room dressed for a drive and remained standing. I told her who I was. She remembered my family perfectly well and listened with civility as I told her in a few words that I was friendless and alone in the city, and had walked the streets without food or sleep for two days. When I had finished speaking she said coldly, as she drew on her gloves :

“‘You seem to be a healthy, strong young woman, able to work. You will thank me in the future for refusing to assist you, because you will not be humiliated. Good day.’

“I had never dreamed before there could be such hard, cold, awful selfishness in this world, and when I went down to the street where some little children were playing in the sunshine, it seemed warm and friendly.

“I shall not tell you the whole story of those days of terrible suffering. There is no need of giving you such pain. Many times I applied for

work, but I had no recommendations, and I was always refused.

“The third night the rain poured in such torrents I could no longer stay in the street and I sought shelter in one of the lodging-houses provided for the poorest and lowest. The profane language, the coarse jests and ribald stories were much worse to me than the storm outside, and on the streets I once more found refuge with the wind and rain, which at least were pure.

“It was in the blackest hour of this night that the scene in the warm, brilliant garden at Verona came back to me, and I remembered the gardener's solemn and impressive words, ‘Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.’ In this moment of utter helplessness and desolation, I turned to him, my only Friend, and prayed to him as I had never before prayed in my life. No visible answer came at once to my prayer, but such a feeling of refreshment and ease entered my heart that I knew God was with me; and like a helpless child in its father's arms, I trusted him to carry me. I could go no further alone.

“The streets were deserted at that hour in the morning, and the air as it came in from the sea was fresh and sweet. Somewhere I knew there was a sunrise by the glint of gold on the windows and the gleam on the cross of a near-by church. I was stopping to rest a few moments on a door-

step in front of a bakery when the woman who lived there returned from market with flowers in her basket. I supposed she would push me off harshly, and while I was wondering if I would have the strength to take another step, the good woman selected a beautiful pink from her basket and handed it to me, smiling upon me kindly. God only knows the comfort the flower and the kind look gave me at that moment.

"Can I be of any help to you?" the woman asked, resting her basket on the step. The tears streamed down my face but I could not utter a word in reply.

"I have known trouble myself," said the good woman patiently. "Come into my back room and have a cup of coffee with me and we will talk it over together and see what can be done."

"Feeling that she was sent of God, in answer to my prayers, I followed my friend into the house where the immaculate order and cleanliness immediately associated themselves in my mind with godliness, and so reassured me, that little by little, I told my whole story, keeping nothing back.

"As this good Samaritan listened to me, she brought dry shoes with stockings to put on my feet, and water to bathe my face, and with her own hands she smoothed my hair tenderly.

"I will go to the pastor," she said, "and tell him about it."

"And what will he do?" I asked, terrified.

"He will do for you what Christ would do. Stay quietly here until I return."

"I remained quietly where she bade me, indeed I was too weak to walk farther, and I wondered what Christ would do if he should come and find me there.

"Presently I heard my kind friend returning, and now I began to tremble lest the past should be with her. I felt I had endured all it was possible for me to endure. I could not go through with the story again. I could not even see any one, and as the door opened I hid my face in my hands. After a moment of silence I looked up to find the good lady smiling down upon me and holding a letter in her hand. I cannot tell you what was in the letter only that it was tenderly comforting, and made me feel that Christ was with me. My friend said that I was to go to a quiet boarding place where the people were Christians; everything was to be done for my comfort and suitable clothing would be provided for me.

"'Do not stint her in clothes,' that was the last word pastor said, and the good woman took my hand in her own reassuringly.

"But how am I to pay for it all?" I asked in bewilderment. "I have no money."

"You have gone through a great nervous strain.

When you are recovered a little, the pastor will come to see you and after that he will talk with you about earning money to repay every penny."

"The quiet boarding place with Christian women proved to be Miss Lavinia and Miss Patty, and they were like angels to me. They cared for me as if I had been their child, and it was several days before I was allowed to leave my bed. Then I found that all of my clothing even to my dress had been washed and ironed. New clothing, dainty and becoming, had also been provided for me.

"At the end of the week the pastor had procured me a position where I could earn my own living and repay his kindness.

"Some time later a lady going abroad wished for a companion who could speak the languages and give her the care I had been used to giving my mother. Pastor Joyce at once thought of me and I secured the position. The lady was good and kind, and I remained with her until she died, or rather, until she entered into life. By her will I was left a modest fortune which secured my independence and enabled me to study for my profession. You know the rest of the story. Hearing that John Kent's house and lands were to be sold, I returned to buy them for the Cure and now the tangle of brush where I was caught stealing hazelnuts has been planted by the gardener with peonies,

lilies and roses. Isn't that a pretty ending for a story?"

"But you found your mother's miniature?"

"Yes, Pastor Joyce brought the wicked agent to justice, and my miniature was found in a pawn shop."

"And John Slocum—how did you find him?"

"When he returned home, I had gone abroad, and by that time my story was forgotten. Mrs. Slocum heard of the Cure through one of my wealthy patrons, and finding that the air here agrees with her, she comes whenever she feels discontented or unhappy at home. John often comes with her and we are good friends, as we have always been. For John's sake I would do all I can for the family, but for Christ's sake I must help Mrs. Slocum."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### A KILLING FROST.

IF it had been hard work to start a flower mission, Bee found it even more difficult to stop. She had a vague idea that the express company would not be willing to go on indefinitely carrying packages free, but she could not withstand the importunities of the children while the frosts were light and late flowers were still blooming in their gardens.

The scarlet bittersweet, with a quantity of white wax berries and a basket of purple grapes, made a fine box, and Bee read to the flower children the following letter which she received in return :

October 10th.

MY DEAR MISS KENT :

The luxurious tints of these bittersweet berries on my desk bring me cheer and peace whenever I look at them, for in them I have a wonderful glimpse of His face, and they speak to me His words of comfort.

I thank you and the ever-beloved flower children, and will you tell them that to-night I mean to put red and white berries on every child who comes to our meeting. The Lord



enrich you for your goodness, and visit you with the angels of his presence.

Yours for His own glory,

THOMAS JOYCE.

Such angelic thanks gave the children fresh enthusiasm for their work.

"Please go on," cried little Onalee. "Mamma has as many as three hundred astors."

So the work was continued, and the next week Bee, Myra, and Helen zealously gathered bunches of marigolds, zinnias, and goldenglow, while Henrietta brought geraniums and fuchsias, and the other girls filled in the corner with ripe sickle pears and choice red apples. Not only did pears and apples find their way in with the bunches of late astors, but sugar cookies Bee had lured from Mother Margaret, and picture papers Myra had begged from her mother, and a special love note from Alice to the little children in the city asking for letters in return.

As the flower children could not begin their work of gathering flowers until after school, their packing was not finished until nine o'clock in the evening. By that time the expressman had forgotten them, so Myra and Ellen put their boxes in an express cart and wheeled them to the station themselves. The flower children fell asleep that night dreaming of the happiness their gifts of flowers and fruit would give.

The next morning Bee was engaged in the delightful occupation of raking up the yard, for a heavy frost the night before had nearly dismantled the trees. The fragrance and bright colors of the leaves, the crisp autumn air, the exercise, and the pleasure of seeing order come out of disorder, all these filled the girl's mind with cheery thoughts that seemed to flutter around her like the gayly colored leaves themselves, and so engrossed her mind that she did not notice the approach of Billy Downs until he was shuffling through her pile neatly raked up, and scattering the leaves in every direction.

"Myra asked me to bring it quick, so I came across lots," explained Billy, handing Bee a note from Myra, accompanied by a strange looking letter written on paper such as is used for telegrams, and addressed to Alice.

"It's something about the flowers," said Billy, in reply to Bee's look of inquiry. "Seems as if the agent was agin 'em, an' he didn't let 'em go last night."

"Why, Billy Downs!"

"It's the truth," and with this Billy put his hands in his pockets and sauntered away.

Bee glanced at the note from Myra, and then read hurriedly the note from Alice, but was so bewildered as to its meaning that she ran into the

house with it to Brother Will, who read it through carefully aloud :

MISS ALICE CHASE :

DEAR MADAM :

I must decline to make any future shipments of flowers—free.

The labels you use for flower packages appear to have been distributed promiscuously and have fallen into the hands of parties who have abused the privilege.

Last night—October 24th—I intercepted three shipments of fruit being made to individuals under cover of address to the Flower Mission, New York, and such an abuse of privilege cannot be passed over. Future shipments, if made, will have to be paid for. Please see that this is understood by all concerned.

Yours respectfully,

M. E. BURZE, Agent.

“We have a right to send fruit and cookies and picture papers,” insisted Bee, her eyes sparkling with indignation. “That is part of our relief work and mercy work.”

“Where is your first letter, Bee, giving you permission to send packages by express?”

“Alice gave it to me, and I put it somewhere—oh, I remember—I put it in the lower drawer of your writing desk, because you never let any one touch things in that drawer,” and Bee tumbled every paper in the drawer out on the floor, while William Eldbridge, an orderly man, groaned in spirit.

"Here it is!" cried Bee, drawing out the desired letter triumphantly, while the other papers were left strewn about like leaves—"It says 'flower mission baskets.' That means apples or pears or whatever you want to put in them."

"It may be," said Brother Will, scrutinizing the letter closely. "Flower mission baskets weighing less than twenty pounds may be carried free of charge when addressed to charitable institutions or organizations. You sent one box to Mrs. McCrystal. Is she a charitable institution, or is she an organization?"

Bee looked perplexed.

"Some more boxes were sent to Pastor Joyce; that was perfectly correct, for Pastor Joyce is both a charitable institution and an organization, but maybe the express companies don't recognize him as such. We must explain it to them more fully.

"But, Brother Will, it is such an insulting letter; the idea of 'intercepting shipments of fruit being made to individuals under cover of address to the Flower Mission,' just as if we were pirates. Myra sent a note telling me the girls worked until nine o'clock last night and then carried their boxes to the station."

"Which was worse than being pirates," said Brother Will severely. "Little girls should have been in bed and asleep at such an hour. I see he

also accuses you of distributing the flower mission labels promiscuously. It that true?"

"Brother Will, when the 'forty fresh-air children were here last summer and wanted to send flowers home to their brothers and sisters, we let them use the labels. Wasn't that flower mission work?"

"Yes, child, but it must be done in a regular, authorized way. You cannot expect the company to send a great heavy wagon five or six miles with one small box of flowers to somebody's brother or sister who lives up three or four flights in a tenement, but the express companies are willing to send a thousand flowers to one station, and the McCrystals and the fresh-air children can go after them; and get some good in the going."

"But wasn't it mean of the agent to refuse to send the boxes after we had worked so hard over them?" grieved Bee.

"He was simply doing what an honest man considered his duty by his employers. It would have been much worse if he had sent them with charges to be collected at the other end. I have been told by some one who knows, that flower mission people in the city are obliged to pay charges on a great many boxes and it is a heavy tax on them."

"Of course I wouldn't have Mrs. McCrystal pay express charges on a dozen apples and a few

bunches of flowers for anything on this earth ! Shall I thank Agent Burze for not sending them ? I don't want to, Brother Will. He has put an end to our flower mission and he is saying hateful things about us—it's so mean of him when we are just little girls and he is a great big man ! ”

“ The best defense that a little girl, or any one, has against unkindness is given in the Bible,” and turning to Proverbs, Brother Will read reverently :

“ A soft answer turneth away wrath.”

“ How can I send Station Agent Watson a soft answer ? ” asked Bee in some surprise.

“ Thank him for his kindness during the past summer. He has been kind. Explain to him a little the work Pastor Joyce is doing down there with the flowers. Tell him honestly that you are sorry you have not been more obedient to the company's rules. Mother Margaret and I have been to blame in bringing you up to obey in such a careless, haphazard kind of way, but this letter pulls you right up to the mark. It is the best lesson in obedience you ever had.”

“ I'll write it if you tell me to,” said Bee, with the air of one who suffers martyrdom, “ but I don't want to. I would rather go back to school. When am I going back, Brother Will ? ”

“ Not this year. Dr. Ellen says you must stop and grow strong.”

"But the other girls will go on and finish their education."

"An education is never finished, Bee. The idea is ridiculous. Our whole life here is just one little school-day where we learn A.B.C.'s of things."

"Well, I've learned one lesson," said Bee, retiring behind her handkerchief, "and it's giving up all the while. First it was Dr. Ellen, and then it was the flower mission, and now it's going to school," and Bee choked down a sob.

"I never did like crying children," said Brother Will. "I am looking for a real cheerful girl to go with me over the hills this afternoon hunting up lambs."

"I am a cheerful girl," declared Bee, rubbing her eyes briskly.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE SECRET OF A WEED'S PLAIN HEART

"OUT of the fresh woodes cometh all these new flowers here"——

Here William Eldbridge suddenly closed the musty book he was reading, and replaced it on the shelf.

"Come, little sister," he said, "I hear our old friend Mr. Crow calling to us," and putting a roll of manuscript in his overcoat pocket he took down his hat and stick.

Bee needed no second invitation, for it was a pleasant day in early April when the maple blossoms were scarlet and the swelling buds on the elm were showing like knotted lace against the blue above. As they took their way through the orchard, they spied a pair of bluebirds investigating the possibilities of housekeeping in the bole of an old apple tree, and a thrifty robin picking up shreds of last year's grass for a nest, while a song sparrow was thrilling all the air with the silvery sweetness of overflowing gratitude.



"Is that a purple-backed grackle, or just a plain ordinary blackbird?" questioned Bee.

"I don't know, Bee, there are a number of things I don't know."

"I wish you knew more about some things than you do, Brother Will."

"For instance, were the four-and-twenty black-birds that went to make a pie, purple grackles or red wax-wings, or only bobolinks?"

"No, I wasn't thinking of a pie. I was thinking, I wished you knew the meaning of abrogated?"

"Abrogated! Where did the child stumble upon such a word as that?" exclaimed William Eldbridge in surprise. He was seated on a low and comfortable stone wall just convenient for reading manuscript, while Bee was hunting industriously under the leaves for the first pink arbutus.

"I came upon the word abrogated in my correspondence," returned Bee, continuing her occupation with some dignity. "You remember Agent Burze wrote he would carry no more shipments free. Then we wrote to Mr. Bird, general manager of the express company, and asked him if flower mission baskets didn't mean fruit and cookies and picture papers as well as flowers, and he said they did, and wrote to Agent Burze to be kind to us. Agent Burze came to see us

after that and said he had lived for years and years in New York, and he knew what a flower meant to people down there, and his heart was with us in our work. I was so glad I sent the soft answer as you told me too, Brother Will."

William Eldbridge put his manuscript in his pocket with a sigh. When a flower mission story began there was no telling how long he would be called upon to listen.

"The other day," continued Bee, still on her knees hunting after arbutus blossoms, "I wrote to Agent Burze and asked if he would send a box of scrap books and maple sugar. I told him this came under relief work."

"Maple sugar——relief work——Oh?" commented Will, with an accent that was questioning, if not skeptical.

"And I told him what Mr. Bird had written," continued Bee, with her mind so intent on her arbutus blossoms that she could not be hurt by ridicule.

"And what did Agent Burze say?"

"He said 'free shipments of flowers have been abrogated.' I wouldn't have minded so much if he had not said abrogated, but that sounds so unkind. What does it mean, Brother Will?"

"It means to do away with." The flower mission is done away with. There was entire resignation in Brother Will's voice as he spoke.

"But it isn't done away with," said Bee, courageously. "I have prayed about it."

"There are more things wrought by prayer than we dream of," mused William Eldbridge.

"And I have written to Mr. Bird and sketched the flower children at the top of the letter as little birds sitting on a twig, and the rain pouring down on them and streaming off like tears. When he looks at those birds he will know how sad we feel, and I have written to Dr. Ellen, and she will go to Pastor Joyce and he will visit Mr. Bird. If any one can help us, it will be Pastor Joyce."

"It's an ill wind that doesn't blow somebody good," said Brother Will, getting down from the stone wall. "If the flower mission should be abrogated, we won't be tormented with flower children packing flowers on our front porch all summer," and Brother Will swung his stick with an air of hope as he strode along while Bee, darting first to one side of the road and then to another, looking for some new flower, always managed to keep up with him.

"Don't abrogate the flower children yet, Brother Will," pleaded Bee. "If we can't send flowers away, we can send them around here at home. These arbutus blossoms will make Grandma Amesbry feel as if she were a girl again, and maybe a bunch would be a comfort to

Comrade Hayes' wife. You know she has been ill all winter. Then I have a plan, just splendid, of carrying flowers to prayer meeting. You know we have flower children in all the churches, and it would be more fun."

"I never heard of people going to prayer meeting for fun," returned William Eldbridge, in solemn reproof.

"I mean it would be pleasanter and brighten up things prayer meeting nights," said Bee, trying to be more proper. "If here isn't—yes it is—a yellow dandelion! You jolly little thing!" and Bee stroked the dandelion's yellow hair caressingly. "I won't pick this one, Brother Will. It was so brave to come up before the snow has all melted."

"If that dandelion could talk—" mused William Eldbridge.

"What would it say?" questioned Bee, always eager for a story.

"Will you promise to keep all flower children away——"

"Oh, yes, for a long, long while, until strawberry time maybe, or until early apples are ripe."

"The dandelion, like some little girls I know, always loved to have her own way."

"Now, Brother Will, that isn't fair."

"And the dandelion's way," continued Brother

Will, "was to grow up tall, with a fine long stem so that she might always be nodding and shaking her head, and bobbing around merrily in the wind and sunshine.

"When the storm came beating down she drew her green waterproof hood up close over her head, and while the thrush sang its roundelay, she danced and danced and swung back and forth with the rain drops, this gay young dandelion.

"But one morning the gardener came with the lawn-mower and cut her down. It was a cruel thing to do; but this gardener had no thought of kindness for dandelions, and he came again and again.

"Now this was discouraging when a dandelion feels herself made to dance on a long elastic stem with such jocund friends as the wind and the rain and the sunshine. But the dandelion was not to be discouraged, and in her wise little brown heart she considered how she might best meet adversities, such as gardeners and lawn-mowers.

"At last—she was trampled upon and bruised and crushed under foot to the earth, this brave dandelion. But the brightness and gladness and beauty were still there in her faithful brown heart, and gazing steadfastly up into heaven, she sent up one trustful little bud without any stem at all. Now her sister dandelions do the same, and they bloom and bloom and bloom until a

stretch of green lawn will look as if it were buttoned down all over with bright gold pieces."

"Is this a true story?" questioned Bee.

"Yes, it is a true story, and if you don't believe it, you can ask the dandelion."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE KINDNESS OF MR. BIRD

A FEW days after this story of the faithful dandelion, Bee received a letter from Pastor Joyce which gladdened the hearts of all her flower children. It was this :

MY DEAR MISS KENT :

After an earnest prayer in my study, I called upon Mr. Bird the general manager of the express company. He is a noble tender-hearted man, and listened to my request for your flower children to continue their work with most generous courtesy. After some little consideration he decided to grant your children a special dispensation to send thirty pounds a week for thirty weeks. He has written to this effect to Agent Burze. I believe this opening of the way for the flower mission to be an answer to prayer.

May his dear Presence be with you and your dear flower children richly.

Your friend to serve you,

THOMAS JOYCE.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### BENEATH THE CROSS IT GREW

MY BELOVED DR. ELLEN :

When Brother Will went down to New York early in May, we looked for you to come back with him and when you did not come our disappointment was like to break our hearts, but Mother Margaret said I was not to speak of it, so I won't.

We are all glad to see Miss Lavinia though, and to have the solid mahogany furniture restored to the Primrose hearth. I never knew that Miss Lavinia left home because she and Aunt Carlotta had a quarrel, but now it is all made up and the sisters are as happy and loving as can be. Most any day you can see them out picking mint together, and then people going by say :

" There's the Primrose girls ! How tidy they keep things up ! "

Miss Carlotta takes care of the garden mostly, and Miss Lavinia cleans the inside of the house until everything is as smooth as glass and one slips up when she sets foot on the rugs. I went over with Miss Lavinia the first morning and explained to her why we called Anne Addaline, " Postscript." Postscript's flaxen tails were braided just as neat and her cheeks were so pink from being bashful, and she wore a blue cotton dress and a clean white apron that made her look like a precious piece of china.

Postscript showed us her playhouse under the circle of hemlock trees where the branches are so thick overhead it is just as good as a roof, and the needles on the ground make a thick dry carpet. Postscript has a hammock out there and pine needle pillows, and two or three chairs, and a cupboard



where she has some odd pink and blue dishes that have been nicked or cracked a little but they are just as good for a playhouse. Sometimes we put our pails of water with flowers in there because it is so cool and always shaded from the sun.

Miss Lavinia approved of the cupboard and dishes because they looked so neat. She says it is good to learn to work when you are young and then when you are old, you will never depart from it.

I am writing you this letter, dear Dr. Ellen, a little at a time, because it seems more like talking to you, and I can make it last longer.

This morning Postscript and I went out to gather pansies before breakfast, and we found the velvet petals just covered with a coat of rough crystals of dew which melted away while we looked at them. Brother Will said it was these crystals of dew from millions and millions of leaves and blossoms, that were drawn by the sunbeams into the sky and piled up in soft white clouds. Afterwards when we lifted our faces to look at the clouds floating so quietly through the sky, without so much as a peg to hang on, we could not help wondering why they did not fall down.

I have been thinking more of these things since Brother Will gave me a book called, "How to Know the Wild Flowers." When we take Mother Margaret and this book with us, we learn a lot about every little weed by the way. Mother Margaret knows more stories about various herbs and curious wild flowers, and when Brother Will comes along, he tell us about the ways of birds and butterflies, gophers and squirrels, until we feel really acquainted with them. Sometimes we find refreshments such as roots of sassafras and partridge berries, and in one lonesome little hollow, we found Jack-in-the-pulpit growing. It's leaves were all splashed with purple, and turning to the book we found this legend :

" Beneath the cross it grew,  
And in the vase-like hollow of the leaf,



A WILD FLOWER PARTY  
p. 229

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

## BENEATH THE CROSS IT GREW 229

Catching from that dread shower of agony  
A few mysterious drops, transmitted thus  
Unto the groves and hills their healing stains,  
A heritage for storm or vernal shower never to blow away."

Several other legends we copied and tied to bunches of homely wild flowers to make our boxes more interesting. Then Postscript and I pulled up tiny little pine trees, and arranged them carefully into the box too, just because they had a spicy woodsy smell and reminded one of jollifications, but Miss Lavinia who came along while our backs were turned, threw them all out. I was just blazing for a minute and then my eyes happened to rest on the Jack-in-the-pulpit and I remembered,

" Beneath the cross it grew "

and I knew that if I hated Miss Lavinia, I would be just like the wicked people who nailed Christ to the cross. I don't want to be like that or like Grandfather Kent any more, and there isn't time, anyway, if one has a flower mission. Aunt Carlotta and the other neighbors sent in a good many flowers and when we had them all heaped in pails and milk pans and pitchers around the well, it was the prettiest sight you ever saw in your life.

Brother Will let Postscript and me give a wild flower party up in the sugar-house where they stay when they make maple sugar. Mother Margaret and Aunt Carlotta baked up things and the boys scoured the woods for the most curious and unknown and unheard of wild flowers. We had them in vases and pitchers and bowls, and then we gave prizes to the girl who could tell the most about them. Brother Will gave a vase filled with confections to the girl who was acquainted with the most wild flowers, and I was so glad that Grace Mary got it, for it isn't many confections that goes her way. Alice had three lily bulbs for telling the most stories about flowers, and to Postscript was given a large bunch of pinks because she knew the most about herbs

## 230 *BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN*

and plants to dry for medicine. Oh, it was more fun, I wish you could have been here, Dr. Ellen.

Grace Mary brought violets to our prayer meeting, and Postscript brought lilies of the valley and I brought a vase with just one blossom, a Jack-in-the-pulpit and with it the legend :

“ Beneath the cross it grew.”

The pastor studied it awhile and then he spoke of the work of the flower children and he said the flower mission was like that blossom, it grew under the cross. He said everything in the world that was tender and pitiful and loving came from the heart of Christ.

Then the pastor's wife prayed that the Lord would bless the work of the flower children and give them strength and courage to go on. It was a good prayer because the pastor's wife helps us all she can herself.

As we walked home, under the stars, Grace Mary, Postscript and me, we talked of these things. Brother Will won't let us go to prayer meeting any more because he says little girls must not be out so late.

When are you ever coming home, dear Dr. Ellen, to your child who loves you ?

BEE.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### A LETTER FROM DR. ELLEN TO BEE

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL :

My heart does not consent to this long silence, but Mrs. Slocum clings to me so much these days, there is little time for writing letters.

As William has told you the Slocums are now at their house in town, and Miss Patty is with Mr. and Mrs. Laurie who are taking care of the country house at Rosefield. It is delightful to see how Mr. and Mrs. Laurie love Miss Patty, and how happy they are together.

You will remember the quantities of fine flowers on this country place, and just now the glass-houses are filled with rare chrysanthemums. You can imagine that to Evelyn these flower gardens are a paradise and that she does not forget Pastor Joyce's flower mission.

I wish I could just look in upon you and Mother Margaret, and enjoy seeing Aunt Carlotta and Miss Lavinia gathering mint, instead of writing this letter.

When I came upon the hair you sent me from Mink's tail, I am not ashamed to tell you I had a jolly good cry. It reminded me of so many hours pleasuring we have had together, and I could just see you and Mother Margaret brushing his fat sides with a switch while entreating him :

"Go on, Mink! Go on!"

Will you pat Mink for me and tell him to be good, and hurry up more when you need him to carry flowers for your flower mission. Tell William, he must have patience with Mink's behavior when he kicks up his heels and gallops through all the muddy places in the road, and as for his poking along at such a slow pace over the stretches of good road, that is a habit acquired from being driven so many

years by the Cure ladies. They are always wanting to stop and look at the views, so Mink has learned pretty nearly where the views begin, and slows accordingly. Good old Mink, there was not a horse could pass him on the road when I first began my practice.

Last night Eloise and I went down to Pastor Joyce's chapel to attend the children's meeting and we both agreed that the radiant warmth of love in these young hearts is something wonderful, and that this meeting is a center of spiritual life which must be felt through the whole neighborhood. I talked to them a little about the children who send them the flowers every week and you should have seen their faces brighten up. I wish some of your blossoms might return and tell you of the adventures they meet with, and the good they are doing down here.

As I was going down a little narrow street yesterday a queer woman met me and said :

"What lovely flowers, I suppose you live where they grow?"

I said they had been sent me and she asked :

"But you do see them growing?"

I said I did, and then she noticed the pansies and said :

"I always loved pansies."

I told her I would bring her a bouquet the next week and I did. She seemed greatly pleased and gave them to her old mother. They both drink—the younger woman particularly gets on great sprees; but perhaps we may be able to do something for her since the flowers have opened the way. A lot of little girls stopped me on the street and asked me for just one daisy each. We then took some to a little lame girl who has been in the hospital a long time.

Still another bunch of pansies went to a woman who has sunk far down in sin. Time and time again we would go to her door and find it locked, but when her little girl would peep out and see a bunch of flowers, the door would be opened. The woman is repenting and seems to catch at the flowers as something breathing hope to her heart. It seems

## LETTER FROM DR. ELLEN TO BEE 233

a crisis with her and we are praying that she may give her life into the keeping of Christ.

It rained all day Friday but I went out in spite of the rain and was very glad I had gone. One old gentleman, when he saw how wet I was, said he would not ask me to come in and told me to hurry home and get on dry clothes. But he was very glad to get the flowers and the wetting did not hurt me at all.

I must tell you one more incident of a few sprays of mignonette. An old woman we visit lives in two rooms in a garret. Her husband is a cripple, yet he was out all day in the rain trying to sell a few things. They have almost nothing in the house and sleep on a mattress on the floor. She said she had been thinking of me and that I could not bring the flowers in the pouring rain, but she hoped I would be there the next morning. When I looked around, I found she had a few sprays of mignonette which she had saved from the week before. They were in fresh water sitting there where they could get the air and light. This mignonette, so carefully tended got me to thinking how much it would mean to some of these poor people if they could only have gardens. With only a little piece of ground this woman could earn her own and her husband's living besides enjoying many happy days in the care of it. It was strange, was it not, that a spray of mignonette should preach to me like that?

Give my loving greeting to the dear flower children. My prayer is that Christ, who loves them so tenderly and cares for them every day, will keep them as pure and innocent as the flowers they work with, and that he may perfect his plans for them, for he has a plan for every young life more beautiful than we can ever imagine. Let us help Christ to make his plans come true. In your work, your lives are hid with him as in a garden of sweet smelling flowers, for the loving thoughts you carry about with you are like that.

Always loving you,

ELLEN MCGREGOR.



## CHAPTER XXXIX

### A LETTER FROM PASTOR JOYCE TO THE FLOWER CHILDREN

#### MY BELOVED FLOWER CHILDREN :

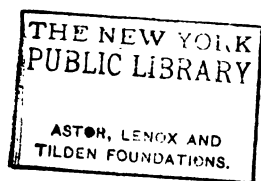
I always keep in your debt and am slow uncertain pay. Do not scold me for taking Dr. Ellen away from you. The coming of the Corinthian down here has been a holy benediction, the kind that keeps. If I could tell you all that she is doing for our children you could not wish her back again.

We have had a peculiarly rich season with the flowers and you will be glad to hear about it because you first started the flower mission with a box of violets. No one had ever sent us flowers before but when others heard of the work you were doing they wanted to help, and now flowers are sent to us from Maine, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. More would send us flowers if they were not so distant. One florist sends us one thousand gladiolis weekly. Last Sabbath we decorated the church with them and had a glorious time. Your friend, Mrs. Laurie, not only sends from her own garden, but interests the florists in her neighborhood in our work, which brings us an abundance of choice flowers. She sends us chrysanthemums until she is known down here as the "chrysanthemum angel." The work is now so far reaching that we have employed a helper to carry flowers into homes of the sick and to hospitals.

You do not know what these flowers mean to our children. Save in parks or florists' windows, there are none that we see. Little children down here never see a leaf or a flower grow. At night, we have to look at the stars and make



FLOWER MISSION WORK IN NEW YORK  
*p.* 235



## *A LETTER FROM PASTOR JOYCE 235*

them our flowers, and while they are so far off, they bring God near. In this wilderness of brick and stone we are so hungry for closer touches of what God makes, and men and women as well as the little children need these evangels of his love.

"Please, mister, just one. Oh, how many you have, and I do love flowers!" "Just one, only one: see, give to this sick child." "Oh, can't I have one, just one, for my mother? Please! please!"

So they cry on every hand as I meet them on the crowded streets. They hold on to me, plead piteously and pull for the daisies which farmers despise. I have seen a child pick up a wilted flower in the street with a smile of love, kiss it, hold it to her lips, then press it to her heart, hoping to give it life, and sad that it is wounded, bruised and dying away from home. I have seen the child gather from the garbage can, where the refuse of careful pickings has been cast out, and scramble to get a single leaf or petal, I have found flowers in their homes tended, watered, kept in the sunlight with a nurse's care, and kept, though dead, until others came.

Round about me, where I live, are thousands of children. On a bright day the sidewalks and streets are crowded. They swarm like bees after a shower when the sun peeps out from the cloud. They are always in the merry glee of play. Their laughter and shouts make the walls resound with life.

Time and again I stand at my little iron gate with a few flowers in my hand. No word spoken, no sign made, I stand with the flowers, looking at them, loving them, wondering about them, and as though some magic wand had summoned them I am surrounded by our human flowers, the children. It is a crowd now, and they are clamoring, pushing, beseeching. Just one blossom.

I invariably give first to the smallest and those who seem to be the poorest and weakest. If one is sickly, that child is sure to receive an extra one. If one is crowded back by those who are stronger, she is called and made glad. Even

## 236 *BEE'S FLOWER CHILDREN*

when all the flowers are gone and only a few stems and broken blossoms remain, there are those who ask for them.

One day, with a song to call the many, and then a flower to each, to call a great company, in thirty minutes over twenty-five hundred persons were counted. What were the gifts in my hands among so many? Nor did the Master multiply them that day.

I cannot tell you how much the cause of goodness and of God has been helped or how much I personally owe to you flower children. I have felt that with every flower came their love and tenderest prayers, and I am sure it is making them braver and truer to so lovingly sacrifice their gardens for our flowerless homes.

As far as fame is concerned, I am becoming famous here among the children and wherever I go, they follow and cry out :

“ Pastor ! ”

I am more their pastor than I dare to think, and every day I have more work to do and more encouragement to be patient. When the children thank me I reply :

“ Do not thank me, but thank God, for his loving kindness, and thank the flower children. .

The Lord give you many blessings and lift you into his brightest smile.

Most heartily yours,

THOMAS JOYCE.

## CHAPTER XL

### DR. ELLEN'S LETTER TO MOTHER MARGARET

MY DEAR MOTHER MARGARET :

I have sad news to tell you. You know my fears lest Mrs. Slocum might lose her mind and that for this reason we have kept a nurse with her night and day. For the last few weeks our patient has seemed so much brighter and better that our vigilance had relaxed a little, and yesterday morning while out for a drive, the nurse left her in the carriage alone for a few moments and when she returned Mrs. Slocum had disappeared. We can find no clue to her whereabouts, although detectives have been employed, and John Slocum, Pastor Joyce, and Mr. Laurie were out all night. Sweet Evelyn is doing her best to mother Eloise and to comfort her. It would be a great support to all of us if Will would come on at once. And, dearest Mother Margaret and my child Bee, pray earnestly for us to our best Friend who has promised to be with us in trouble. We know that his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear.

Yours as ever,

ELLEN MCGREGOR.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE LADY IN BLACK.

“WHAT are you thinking of, trapping all that mud over this clean floor?” was Miss Lavinia’s ungracious greeting to the little girls standing in the middle of the Primrose kitchen clasping each other’s hands convulsively, while the water from their rain-soaked garments trickled down and ran in little rivulets over the immaculate yellow paint of the Primrose floor. “Where have you been?” continued Miss Lavinia, holding up her glass lamp to inspect more critically the shrinking little figures.

“We’ve been,” but here Postscript’s voice and courage failed her.

“We’ve been sending Henry,” began Bee, lifting her face bravely.

“Sending Hen-er-y where?” demanded Miss Carlotta, now coming in and lighting another glass lamp from a row that stood winking with brightness on a shelf over the kitchen table.

“We’ve sent Henry to New York,” concluded

Bee, holding Postscript's hand in her own very tight and firm.

"To New York!" ejaculated Aunt Carlotta.

"My soul and body!" exclaimed Miss Lavinia, and the two ladies dropped into the nearest seats dazed with astonishment.

"Who's going to feed the hens and carry in the mint, I should like to know?" queried Aunt Carlotta helplessly.

"And where did the money come from to send him with?" questioned Miss Lavinia sharply.

"I pawned my watch and Henry took the mint money. Brother Will can pay it back. Don't scold Postscript, I made Henry go," and with this last awful confession Bee let go of Postscript's hand and disappeared in the darkness of the very rainy night.

A half hour later, when Mother Margaret was cuddling her child up in warm blankets and giving her a bowl of hot catnip tea, Bee threw her arms unexpectedly around that good woman's neck saying :

"If all the mothers were like you, dear Mother Margaret, how heavenly it would be! Poor little Postscript was so frightened."

"There is nothing to be frightened about, child. Now tell me the whole story," and sitting on the edge of the bed Mother Margaret took Bee's hand in her own warm one.



"It was going around among the flower children gathering the flowers that we heard of the lady in black. I thought nothing of it at first, but they all said she acted so queer, and yet she was such a lady. Every house she visited she called for a cup of tea. She wanted it hot, but sometimes she would not wait until they could bring it out. Grace Mary said they found her walking in the trillium woods in the edge of the evening and they asked her to spend the night with them. She seemed glad of the shelter, but was up and away before any one stirred in the morning.

"'The queerest part if it all was,' said Grace Mary, 'she made me think of Mrs. Slocum only she was so thin and white, and she didn't act like her one bit.'

"Then it flashed over me that it was Mrs. Slocum, and I told Postscript we must wait and see if she went out on the evening train. Sure enough on the eight o'clock train we had a glimpse of the lady in black getting on to one of the last coaches."

"Henry Primrose and Billy Downs were there because they claimed Billy's horse was so long they had to bring it down to the station to turn it around, but we knew it was just because the boys wanted the fun of seeing the train come in. Henry has been longing for a trip to New York so it

didn't take more than a minute and a half to persuade him to go. With the mint money and my watch we bought his ticket, and then I gave him my pocketbook with the little there was in it and a scrap of a letter from Pastor Joyce, so that in great need he might go to him. The lanterns were beginning to swing, and it was pouring down rain, when Postscript kissed Henry good-bye, and I hustled him on the train telling him to stick to Mrs. Slocum like a burr until they reached New York."

"You telegraphed to William?"

"Yes—I thought of that."

"And did Henry have on his blue overalls?"

"Yes," and at this Bee and Mother Margaret embraced each other, crying and laughing together.

The next morning being Saturday, Bee helped Mother Margaret with various household duties and at last the two sat down to shell pease in the sitting-room where the coolness and quiet were grateful on this warm summer day. Bee watched the clock with nervous expectation and was the first one to spy Billy Downs coming down the leafy road on his wheel, "taking a scorcher," as the boys say. Almost at the same moment Postscript appeared also looking anxiously expectant.

The telegram Billy Downs brought in was this:

"To Mrs. Margaret Eldbridge. Met the

train. No trace of Mrs. Slocum or Henry. No effort spared to find them. William Eldbridge."

"What shall we do?" cried Bee, looking white and ready to faint, while Postscript burst into tears and ran home.

"We can go to our Heavenly Father," returned Mother Margaret. "He can send helpers more than we can number," and the two knelt in prayer.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

SATURDAY evening in New York found a sultry cloud hanging over the whole city which with its brazenness seemed fairly to beat back the furnace-like heat of these seething city streets, where little children were gasping and strong men were panting for a breath of fresh air. It was this time Pastor Joyce chose for distributing the flowers, which were singularly refreshing and grateful to the multitude who gathered from every side to receive them.

Presently James McCrystal was seen making his way through the crowd, and as Minna leaned over to hand him the box intended for his mother, he pointed backward with frantic gesticulations; but Minna could see nothing unusual in the street, only a cab stopped by the multitude pressing around it. As James drew nearer, Minna could hear him shout :

“ They are in trouble. They want the Pastor.”

"James McCrystal has found some one who is in trouble and wants to see you, Pastor," said Minna, going back for more flowers.

"Then we must open the gates."

"You cannot live if the mob press in."

"They can do me no harm unless the Lord is willing."

"But, Pastor, the Lord has given you the defense of the gates."

"Not to keep out any who may be needing me."

"I think it is the people in the cab, and they can wait."

"Or they may go away and the opportunity be lost. Tell the boys to open the gates, but do you and Marguerite go inside the study. If it is a woman I shall need you to help me."

"As I let them within the church railing," Pastor Joyce related afterwards, "there seemed to be forty million more or less. I was almost trampled down. The perspiration rolled from me as though a cloud had emptied on me. I know now why Jesus compelled the multitude to sit down in companies. I tried to. As the last stem and leaf was given out there did come a real cloud-burst drenching the children, but still they waited hoping for more flowers until a heavy storm swept them away. Long before that, James McCrystal and I were able to

make our way to the cab waiting for me in the street."

"'Henry Primrose,' announced James McCrystal, dragging a boy out of the cab, whose face was stained with tears and who wore the most remarkable looking overalls you ever saw. A lady in the cab who had also been weeping, I recognized as Mrs. Slocum, and lifting her in my arms like a little child I carried her into my study where Minna and Marguerite cared for her, while James and Henry took the cab and went after Dr. Ellen, who fortunately was in the crèche near by."

On the way back, Henry told Dr. Ellen the story of his day with Mrs. Slocum. It seems that she had insisted upon leaving the train before they reached New York, and taking a trolley car. After long wanderings and getting lost on the wrong ferries and many other heart-breaking experiences with the willful lady, Henry had managed to get her into a cab and, using the address Bee had given him, the boy drove directly to Pastor Joyce's flower mission and there with the help of James McCrystal found the Pastor himself.

"You are a hero, Henry," said Dr. Ellen, putting her arm around the brave lad, "and you have saved Mrs. Slocum's life. James McCrystal works for Mr. Slocum now, and I shall see

that he has a week off to show you all the sights of New York." The cab could hardly contain the two boys after that.

Meanwhile Pastor Joyce had sent a message which carried great joy to Mother Margaret and her neighbors.

"The lost are found. All is well."

## CHAPTER XLIII

### JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

IT was now two years since the man carrying apple blossoms on the ferry-boat had given Bee the idea that apple blossoms may be useful for cheering up people. It was June now, and in place of the gray sea, Bee was looking out over green fields and leafy hedges ; and, if both heaven and earth were infinitely wider than they had ever been, it was because the girl had come into the possession of an inner life of which before she had hardly been conscious.

On the outside, Bee was the same lively, freckle-cheeked girl, with a laugh in her eyes and a ring of mirth in her voice, but those who knew her best, realized that Bee was not the same girl. She did not always let her temper run away with her these days. She tried to hold on to herself and occasionally achieved a splendid victory.

"Can I have Postscript this morning?" Bee asked of Miss Lavinia, pleasantly.

"No," returned Miss Lavinia, tartly. "Anne



Primrose has something to do besides gadding round to the neighbors every whipstitch. She is washing dishes."

Bee felt the lash; for a moment her lips quivered and her cheeks burned, but before Miss Lavinia could slam the door in her face, she said serenely :

"I'll help Postscript finish up the dishes. I thought she would like to hear about Henry."

"Have you come from school to stay?" questioned Aunt Carlotta, who now appeared, readjusting her glasses to make sure that this well behaved young person was that little wildcat she used to know as Bee Kent.

"Brother Will had to be away, and Mother Margaret was alone, so Dr. Ellen sent me home before vacation. I saw Mrs. Laurie yesterday and Miss Patty, and they sent everybody their love, and wished you and Miss Lavinia would come and visit them. Mr. Laurie said it would do you both good, and they wished you would bring Postscript along."

Bee had no further trouble with Aunt Carlotta or Miss Lavinia that morning, and an hour later, when the dishes were dried and in the cupboard, she and Postscript were having a good visit together under the apple trees.

"It is a gift, a morning like this, all sunshine and fresh perfumed air," Bee was saying. "See,

Postscript, how the light and shadows dance over that bean field when the wind blows the leaves!"

A few weeks later the well-grown leaves on this row of maples would give an organ roll of music as the wind passed, but now the tender young leaves gave out only faint murmurings, which mingled deliciously with the buzzing of honey bees around the hives in the garden, and with the laughing, girlish voices as they poured out their hearts to each other.

"What makes everything dance and jump and sing?" inquired Postscript.

"Mother Margaret says it's God's way. He wants us to be glad. Mother Margaret says its wonderful how much gladness gets into everything. Do you see those fuzzy little apples pushing out from the leaves a bit—that means gladness."

"Perhaps so," said Postscript, thoughtfully. "That's a sour apple tree."

"Even the warm lumps of earth are so glad in the sun," Bee continued, without heeding this discouragement. "It won't be but a little while before they'll be jumping up into asters and sweet peas, and golden-glow for our flower children."

"It takes considerable hoeing and raking," suggested Postscript.

"Yes, you tickle the earth with a hoe and a

flower laughs right out. Do you hear the robins and bluebirds and that little house wren, Postscript? Isn't that pure joy—and they haven't any notes, either."

"And do you hear that crow—caw, caw, caw!"

The girls lifted their faces to watch the flight of a crow beating its way along with strong, vibrant wings, and something in keen sympathy with the bird's wings responded in their own young hearts.

"Did Henry seem real well when you saw him?" Postscript asked, after a little pause.

"He said he would like to see one of Aunt Carlotta's saucer pies, but otherwise he is satisfied. Isn't it good of Mr. Slocum to help him make his way through college?"

"Maybe so," returned Postscript dubiously. To her young mind, a college education would hardly be balanced against saucer pies.

"I have a dream to tell you about, Postscript."

"A dream—will it ever come true?"

"It's so good, it must come true, Eloise says."

"I like to hear dreams."

"But you will be surprised all to pieces with this one."

"I wish you'd tell me quick before Aunt Carlotta calls me in."

"You will never believe it's true."

"I wish you'd tell me."

"You know about the old Slocum place and the old Cranesbill place?"

"Yes, I know about them—the fences are down and the fields are covered with stones and brier bushes. Nobody wants them."

"But Mr. and Mrs. Slocum want them—they have made up their minds to buy them."

"I thought Mrs. Slocum hated the country?"

"But Mrs. Slocum is so different, Postscript. Pastor Joyce and the Thirteenth of First Corinthians have been such friends to her she couldn't help changing—and then she has another friend—Christ. That is what changes her, Dr. Ellen says. You wouldn't believe how different she is, Postscript!"

"Henry writes to me how good she is to him."

"She can never do enough for him."

"What do Mr. and Mrs. Slocum want with these old farms?"

"They want to build homes for poor boys and girls. Dr. Ellen could find enough to fill two or three homes. These homes will be planted with orchards and berry fields, and sewing schools and dairies and beehives, so that the children can work and earn their own living. You know Eloise has been learning to do housework and sew, and she is so interested in this part of the work. Then Dr. Ellen means to have the Cure

made over into a home where mothers can come with their babies. Don't you see, Postscript, in place of sending flowers to the children, we will bring the children to the flowers. Isn't that the sweetest dream? And it all came from the sermon preached to Dr. Ellen by the poor woman with her sprig of mignonette in the attic.

"Oh!" gasped Postscript, hardly able to take it in all at once.

"We want the children to come out here and live under the green trees and blue sky and see the flowers grow. Eloise and I have named it 'Kingdom Come.' Brother Will and Mr. Slocum are advising it over and over, and Dr. Ellen will come back—maybe. We've missed her so much here, Mother Margaret and Brother Will and Mink and me."

"Grandma Amesbry too," added Postscript. "She says when Dr. Ellen went past her door, her rheumatism always felt better."

"When we have Dr. Ellen and the children and flowers and trees and sky altogether, it will be 'Kingdom Come,' When Brother Will comes back, Postscript—we'll know."

"And aren't we going to pack any more flowers?"

"Of course we'll pack some more flowers. We'll pack some this afternoon."

When the flower children were gathered about



**JUST TO MAKE BELIEVE IT WAS RAINING ROSES**

*p. 253*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

her in bright-colored frocks, their young faces beaming from being so clean with soap and water, and with happiness, Bee thought she had never seen a more agreeable looking company. Some of them had curls and some had braids and all wore little butterfly bows of ribbon, pink and white and blue to match their frocks, and Onalee came with flowers pinned all over her parasol just to make believe it was raining roses. As Bee looked into the smiling happy faces around her, she knew in the shine and gladness of the moment what is meant by the joy that shall never be taken away from you.

“Now if you will be good children,” she said, taking Trillia Sylvia upon her lap, “I will tell you a story,” and once more Bee told the wonderful story—the dream of making over the abandoned farms into homes for poor children.

“And we are going to have garden-schools where all the flower children can learn to plant and hoe and rake, and to grow lily bulbs and rose trees and chrysanthemums and berry bushes. And there will be prizes for the tallest sunflowers and the best ears of corn and the sweetest melons—Think of that!”

And the flower children did think of it and shouted for joy and clapped their hands in glee.

“And we will have a flower show with prizes for all kinds of tame flowers—and wild flowers—”



"And ferns and ladies' slippers!" suggested Grace Mary.

At this moment their flights of fancy were interrupted by the sound of a horse's hoofs and the rattle of wheels, and Bee with the flower children dancing around her ran out to meet Brother Will.

"Brother Will, what makes you look so glad?"  
Is it true? *Dr. Ellen is coming back!*"









13<sup>s.</sup> pl.

